



The cover was assembled by the cover-making machine called ANTH.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF SHINYA HASHIMOTO.

Hashif Khan/ Viet Cong Express #2 vs Phil Lafon/ Mike Kirchner- Stampede Wrestling- 11/87: More of Hash North of the border where he was assuming the role of a Mongolian and going to see Condredge Holloway beat the Stamps whenever the Argos would come to town. And mount lovely ladies of Calgary in the backseat of Gamma Singh's Fiero. While Chiliwack or Blue Rodeo was playing on the radio. It had to be heady times for the future IWGP champion. He stands on the apron in tiny trunks with a butt cheek exposed to further attract the ladies of Alberta and when he gets in he is all about the power offence on the future tag partner of Doug Furnas. He is quite the approximation of Killer Khan if you replace Khan's awesome kneedrop with Hash's awesome Elbow drop. I need to go back and watch a thousand Hashimoto matches to see where that carried over to his Japanese canon. And we thank God that he left the nerve pinch up North. And that he would never pull a lariat ever again. Mike Kirchner comes in and is a house afire and hits the shittiest piledriver ever. Hash gently makes the save when LaFon powerslams his Oriental compadre but can't save VC2 from the superkick. Postmatch, Kirchner probably introduced him to these twins he knew in Edmonton that could each fit four tennis balls in their mouths. I like to dream.

INDY SPOTLIGHT: IWA East Coast
[RAVEN MACK]

You know, it's a standard pattern... I quit drinking, telling myself for two weeks, last Thursday. Feeling all introspective after splitting a case-and-a-half of beer laying out of work to go catfishing all day long, wondering where the fuck I'm headed with this one life I've got. And then, on Saturday night, there I was, drunk again.

But those moments of temporary sobriety, full of guilt and reflection, those are important. It is what makes me just a general good-natured low life as opposed to a full-blown dirtbag degenerate. It's a checks-and-balances system, completely internal. I was at a demolition derby on the Friday night of that two-day sobriety, staring at the beautiful asses of redneck sluts, watching the full moon rise over top of a dirt pit where hopeless but happy men smashed perfectly fine cars, at least before they had been painted, in perfect American excess, all for little plastic trophies. But I drove home to my family, not drinking at all on the interstate on a Friday night for an hour, which is rare, and went to bed early - just a simple good-natured low life. If I allowed this thing to get full-blown, I would've been splitting some E with one of those redneck asses at the Red Carpet Inn on route 11 in Harrisonburg, trying to talk her into letting me piss on her in the shower - complete dirtbag degenerate.

That's what brings me to the IWA East Coast, based in the eastern coastal state of West Virginia, because there's probably not a more perfect state and wrestling promotion for the type of person I am - destined for degeneracy but blessed with that internal checks-and-balances that keeps me from wallowing into the deepest depths of depravity that we all have, just waiting to be unlocked like Pandora's box. West Virginia is a great state, and though it tore off of Virginia during the Civil War to not be part of the South, psychologically, it is far more Southern today than Regular Virginia could ever pretend to be. Wild and wonderful, motherfuckers, wild and wonderful.

And Regular IWA is a great promotion, and it shows you Pondo's closeness with Ian Rotten to be allowed to start a secessionary promotion in a distant state that Ian's not willing to lose money in putting on great but lengthy cards in front of 94 people. So the young homey Mushroom Jones sent me some IWA East Coast to dip my eyeballs into, so let's go at it.

Mad Man Pondo vs. Raven - cage match - 06/15/05: Mad Man Pondo freaks me out. He's got the visual appearance of a deranged hobbit mongoloid. And his matches are usually the type of death match that caused people to create the term "garbage" wrestling, because they seem to be more motivated in doing weird perverted in a violent way shit rather than involve the fans in actually being emotionally attached to either competitor. Of course, at the same time, Mad Man Pondo has gotten blowjobs for what he does, regardless of whether it's garbage or hardcore. He probably gets free weed, and I know he has a hot wife. The only lips that have touched my dick in years are my wife's, and yeah, I get free weed, but I had to grow dreadlocks to do so. My wife is hot as well, though probably not in the creepy anime way that most pathetic internet pasty stalking types would find attractive. But getting blowjobs from strangers for free, regardless of sexual orientation, that's a major plus in life. Seriously. So I give Pondo credit for doing something right.

Raven annoys me because I was born in 1973 with the middle name Raven and have been called that since 1973, yet motherfuckers always email me saying "Mack" when I'd never answer to that in real life. Wouldn't even look twice. Stupid famous wrestler named Raven. He was in WCW when I was working at Kinko's, and the Kinko's staff was well-stocked with dorks who had one guy who had an extra bedroom in his apartment set up for long-term Dungeons & Dragons games, and all those guys loved wrestling too, of course, and I'd hear, "What about Raven?" all the fuckin' time. Haha, that's hilarious. Just like when people say, "Quoth the Raven..." Haha, great stuff. Very original. That being said, Raven has also gotten a lot of free blowjobs, far more than Pondo, for doing his deal. And Raven's run in ECW at first was great stuff at the time; plus, you can't spit at an indy show locker room without hitting at least two Raven rip-offs in some way. So I give him credit as well. And I have to admit, even though I'd never think it up on my own as something that's good to have happen, a Mad Man Pondo/Raven steel cage match in Bumfuck, West Virginia, makes perfect beautiful sense.

I take every bad thing I just said about Pondo back, because he comes out in an Antiseen t-shirt, carrying a cinderblock. And Raven comes out in Gen-X Andy Kaufman mode, condemning the inbred crowd for cheering Pondo instead of him, because he's a star.

The emotional question is very evident. Why are they having a cage match? What's the reason? Just for the sake of wrapping a cage around the ring? I don't know if Raven was on any other IWA East Coast show to make this necessary. But Pondo is bloody as fuck, of course. "It almost feels like there's a lot of animosity in the ring, and they're just taking it out on each other however they can," explains the commentator. Sure, that does it for me. Just because.

Okay, Raven sets a cinderblock against Pondo's crotch, breaks it with a sledgehammer in goofy ways, Pondo sells the crotch-shot, Raven with the DDT, then pinfall attempt, but ref stops at two, waits for the Asian second of Pondo to hit him with a stick, then Raven drags her in and gingerly slaps her executive womanly pantsed ass like you would swat at flies while zoning out on hydrocodone at the beach. Pondo is beat down forever, sort of stumbles into one of the worst (not as in ugly but as in stupid-looking) bumps for the legdrop onto the chair thing, but suddenly grabs a staple gun, hits Raven in the baggy plaid skirt, hits him with a chair, and that's it. Over. What a shitty shitty shitty match.

Necro Butcher vs. El Drunko - 06/15/05: "It's the battle of the weed... vs. the battle of the beer," says the commentator. Necro is in cargo pants, and Mickie Knuckles is eating a hot dog on the commentary - so beautifully indy. I much prefer the indy wrestling to the big productions promotions, because indy is where you are there, touching and tasting and feeling the wrestling for yourself, to let it either perfect or pollute your soul. Wrestling is not meant for mass marketing on cable companies, though that does certainly enable it to continue to exist. Wrestling is meant for us all to experience, personally, preferably live as opposed to sitting in front of a pixelated screen, to cleanse us of the bullshit in our lives. I'd take a piecemeal shitty indy card in Bumfuck, West Virginia, over a commercialized sterilized WWE Raw is Merchandise Stand any day of any year. I've never seen the El Drunko character before, and of course, me being a drunkard, I

think he should be CMLL Middleweight Champ by now. Mickie Knuckles on commentary is not very good at all, like listening to high school girls work the summer with you as a painter talking about how they lied about their age to get into the National Guard and they want to go to Iraq to kill a few "Hajis". MAKE MICKIE KNUCKLES SHUT UP! Ei Drunko is comedy wrestling, but the great thing about Nate Webb is his insane exuberance, and the comedy actually holds him back. Usually, a mask releases someone, but not in this case, though I'd never fault a man for throwing on a Mascara Sagrada mask and releasing his inner-Bukowski. You know, listening to Mickie Knuckles and the stoned guy on commentary discuss alcoholism has made the soundtrack worthwhile, even though I contemplated muting it a few minutes ago. I don't think Mickie being stupid is supposed to be on purpose, because she's a face (and what a face she is), but she takes away from the match entirely, and makes the Frank guy who was funny enough to be tolerable through the other matches sound like fuckin' Jesse Ventura in 1988 on the booth micro. Necro is not afraid to throw a vicious lariat. And Mickie Knuckles is not afraid to have a really shrill annoying voice. Mickie condemning the other commentators with, "Y'all are SOO white," is, ironically enough, some hot pot on kettle action. The finish sees some chair contraption being built, and Necro ruining Drunko's spine in sickly fashion to go along with a wasted liver. A pretty sick bump, but ruined into nothing more than Dennis Condrey rocket launching Bobby Eaton onto Rocky King by the shitty commentary that overrides everything in this match. GOD FUCKIN' DAMN! SHUT UP ALREADY!

Tracy Smothers vs. Trik Nasty - 07/13/05: Trik Nasty is on all sorts of match listings for IWA, so I guess he must be the new hot shit or something. He has the build of a high school football tight end who dropped out of the weight room, and plus there's barbed wire designs on his trunks. Barbed wire is played out, holmes; real ass motherfuckers roll with electrified fences nowadays, especially that electrified tape because it's cheap and mobile and you can move it around pretty easily after you get a solar panel or battery hook-up or something hooked to it. Fuck some punk ass barbed wire - that shit don't hold nothing but pussy-assed cows, and I guess horses, which are the bourgeoisie of the barnyard anyways. Goats, pigs, chickens... all the real-ass animals - they laugh at barbed wire and squeeze right through that shit, not even pausing before mucking through the compost bins or chewing up the sunflowers.

Tracy Smothers looks like a man who could and would kick an ass. Seeing him goof off as a fake Italian sort of softens that and makes it sports entertainment. I'd like to see him just start fucking people up, ultra mega mass homicide style, beating kids and gyrating on fat redneck women's titties. Tracy's on the mic doing interactive heel shit-talking with the West Virginia crowd, and I wish Beau James was handcuffed to Ian Rotten ringside and this was a Russian Chain match, even though I don't if Trik Nasty is good enough for something like that yet. "If I hear 'Go Trik, Go' for the local boy here, everybody dies.... everybody.... everybody.... Ain't nobody laughing, do you see a smile on my face?" Aesop Rock couldn't plug Tracy Smothers mic into a mixer's A-channel.

The match eventually starts, and I like how Tracy takes the time to call off the "smart marks" who cheer for bad guys. "Hey! I don't need you cheering for me." I think Rule #24 at wrestling

school should be "If you are a heel, and an enjoyable heel by today's anti-heroic standards, and people cheer for you, if you do not spit on them, you are not a true wrestler."

You know, I've seen a number of Tracy Smothers matches in recent months, both live and on tape, where he has some young kid and is calling the shots, but there is only so far that can take you within a match. Tracy Smothers is a very under-utilized man in today's wrestling. Give me Smothers vs. Necro, or Smothers vs. Preston Quinn, or shit, serve up another round of Smothers vs. Chris Hero now that Hero's a few years wiser in the ring. There's only so much you can try and get a quality veteran name to rub off on younger guys who love tapes but lack crowd control skills before the rub becomes impotent.

And actually, the crowd in screenshot is just sitting there. Sure, someone will mouth off if Tracy instigates it, but it's like call-and-response, everyone performing their duty, like a middle school english class play. I was fucking around late last night, and flipping through my four channels from the antenna, and ran across some shit out of Richmond with a preacher who was wearing a Hawaiian shirt, and he was motherfuckin' preaching. I told my wife, if I ran a wrestling promotion, I'd make people watch this guy for a few hours a month so they could learn how to talk on a mic, because he was working it. And the thing was, people were responding, not because they were supposed to, but because they felt it. They couldn't not respond. It's been a couple of years since I booed because I couldn't fight the impetus within myself to boo. It's been a while since I cheered from pure mark-out bliss I must cheer madness. We are fuckin' robots... oh look at that guy do an impressive un-american lucha-based submission maneuver for the standard two-count clap clap clap wow that's a nice enziguri by that little guy clap clap clap hey samoa joe is internet historically a stiff guy and he just clotheslined some kid who is laying there lifelessly like he's supposed to clap clap clap clap clap that masked guy just did an impressive half-gainer off the top turnbuckle onto those two longhaired guys beside the front row holy shit holy shit holy shit haha that hurricanrana wasn't perfect you fucked up you fucked up you fucked up hey those two dudes are smacking each other across the chest and just standing there letting themselves smack each other and they've given each other red chests even though neither one of them has thought to try to avoid an open-handed smack yet and red chests mean it's a great wrestling match clap clap clap clap clap clap clap i hope they have an iron-man match between these guys so they can slap each other for hours...

Fuck wrestling. I hope Tracy Smothers does commit ultra mega mass homicide on the crowd, and then goes to the West Virginia state prison where he teaches professional wrestling to a bunch of guys who don't really give a fuck, and then there's an inter-promotional war between those dudes and the guys who have been converted by Tully Blanchard down in North Carolina jails, and they all meet on the common ground of the southwest Virginia private prison industry, where you can't even get a motherfuckin' aspirin unless somebody's put five dollars on your books, and then the West Virginia gang, led by Tracy Smothers and a devil-may-care nonchalance, do battle with Tully Blanchard's gang of born-again Carolinians who got hung up in the fast life of being the Kingpin of Reidsville or Henderson's Most Wanted, and they have actual motherfuckin' professional wrestling again, for money on their books, or tattoos in the shower stalls, or anything. This intelligent going-through-the-motions smart mark wrestling

formulaic bullshit is getting on my nerves. Don't people fight anymore? Do people know how to simulate fights? Have guns become so prevalent that kids don't actually get into scraps over whores or bags of weed or scrapes on fresh paint jobs on fresh cars? Goddamn.

I started fast forwarding, and never did Tracy Smothers start stabbing people, so I didn't stop.

Mickie Knuckles vs. Ian Rotten - 07/13/05: I don't get two things about Ian Rotten. One, why does he always talk on the mic for seventeen minutes about how great this guy is and how IWA is about to shut down. And secondly, why does he always have to put himself against the younger people as a rub. Like I mentioned before, the rub sort of goes away the more you rub it against people, and Ian is a motherfuckin' man (1995 Feud of the Year - Pro Wrestling Illustrated - Axl Rotten vs. Ian Rotten), but it looks sort of forced sometimes, like he's a man going through a grappling mid-life crisis.

All that being said, after how annoying Mickie Knuckles was on that last show I watched, I hoped he accidentally stabs her in the larynx with a dildo full of rubbing alcohol (would never happen on a Pondo show though). Is there any sexy slender woman wrestler in America who does the "I'm a great actual wrestler, beyond just being a woman because I'll fight dudes too if necessary" gimmick, or is it just the chubby chicks who do that?

I was bored by this match's Ian saying, "I'm soooo technically proficient," and Mickie saying, "I'm soooo able to hang with the boys," until Ian throws some forearms in her face. That shit was funny. And then they get stupid for a second again, but Mickie brings some nice forearms as well.

This is the underdog story, with Ian beating her down at his will, and allowing her to give him forearm shots. She's outclassed, being a woman. Who am I supposed to root for? The fat chick or the cocky dude? I'm confused. I guess I'll just sit here and watch these two people have a match that means more to them than anyone else.

See, every time I want to give up on this match, Ian will do something like some crossface blows or something that's stiffer than shit and make me pay attention again, though I don't feel completely comfortably mentioning stiffness in relation to strongly beating a woman. Though Mickie does take a nice chairshot. Maybe that's why she sounded so idiotic on commentary before.

The match keeps going, and nobody boos the beating of a woman, nor do they obviously cheer the woman's comeback against the abusive man. Then some dude called The Juggulator, along with some sidekicks, comes out and ends the match by beating down everybody.

Match ends in a draw. So Ian Rotten drew a girl...which doubled his attendance from last week. Thanks folks, I'll be here all week, try the soft-shell crabs.

Oh, they restarted the match so that Ian didn't actually have to draw a girl. He wins. Then they hug. Ian grabs the mic, and I go grab a beer to avoid these two talking together.

Necro Butcher vs. Gypsy Joe - 07/13/05: Gypsy Joe is an old man, and it's good to see he's getting a little recognition again as an old man. You need to have a sense of history behind whatever you do, whether it's simulating fights or dribbling a basketball or writing poetry or et cetera. People blaze a path ahead of you, and though that path might get neglected and grown over a bit, that path is still there. Cactus Jack didn't invent being a hardcore wrestler, and I know for a fact Necro Butcher respects Gypsy Joe immensely and encourages more of the kids into the wrestling today to know and love on Gypsy Joe as well. It's good to give love to those who came before you, not just out of respect but also to show those behind you to do the same, so that you may be taken care of in old age. It's a basic tenet of community.

Gypsy Joe is billed as from Romania. My oldest kid's name is Gypsy, and the name was actually gotten from the Skynyrd song "Roll Gypsy Roll" which was my wife's favorite, but I think if people ask, I'll tell them I named her after Gypsy Joe because I wanted my kid to be indestructible and live a long grand life full of more stories than dollars because stories last far longer than dollars most of the time anyways.

Joe is a midget compared to Necro, but he's also the king of no-selling, taking chops from Necro and just standing there like nothing. Then twists Necro's head, and fishhooks him out the ring. Gypsy Joe looks like some strange Indian chief, lost in the mountains of West Virginia for forty years, and out he comes to fuck shit up for the white man. Joe beats Necro with his own belt, in pure hip hop fashion, and then pushes him down some stairs like a bully.

Necro takes the advantage, and throws some punches, leading to setting up a chair for the senton off the top onto Joe sitting in the chair, but Joe gets out the way and then does a roll-up for the win. Not a great match on its own as a match, but knowing that it's more a doffing of the hat to Gypsy Joe, it's a great match. I've talked to a number of bonehead tough motherfuckers in wrestling who talk of Joe with nothing but awe, and guys like that won't be around forever, and in this day and age of immediate gratification combined with attention deficits, I'm afraid a guy like Gypsy Joe will get lost almost completely within the "history" of the wrestling, which can barely remember past the recent updates page of the Observer website it seems.

Chris Hero vs. Billy Gunn - 07/13/05: I just can't avoid watching this match, because it's the two opposites of my interaction with wrestling. On one side, you've got a homoerotic dude who sold more t-shirts than clotheslines, who has been tossed aside by the sports entertainment machine for younger, fresher, more willing (in all sorts of ways) faces; and on the other side, you've got a nice guy who's dedicated to wrestling more than anything else, but not dedicated to the goofy aspects that would help make him rich, so much as the same basic love for the wrestling that probably had him flipping his brothers over the bed with errant suplexes growing up as kids. I can't even imagine how a match between these two would pan out.

Gunn does the stalling, jaw-jacking bits, and Hero waits patiently for this to move beyond sports entertainment into a wrestling match. And it does, with a sick kick to Billy Gunn's chops. That was sweet.

Gunn's arm, as they do a delayed hand shake thing, looks like an action figure. I don't find that respectable, instead it freaks me out. Match, so far, has been Gunn coasting on his entertaining personality, but step-by-step, getting brought back to the reality of wrestling by Hero's not-fucking-aroundness. And nothing says indy wrestling show like craft paper covering a basketball gym's floor.

This is a great match thus far, with Gunn running things but Hero never saying quit, because he is the young gun. I am distracted by imagining the phone conversation that took place for Pondo to book Billy Gunn to headline his show. They have one of those great tape-worthy Sunday Night Heat matches, but with a reverse ending where the unknown guy wins, and it happens in West Virginia shithole gym rather than Arena, City, America. Or does it? Shit, I'm not sure anymore - the things that I love and the things that I hate have become so convoluted and mixed up that I hate things I used to love and love to hate other things, and I contradict myself mid-sentence.

You see, good wrestling is supposed to give me something to emulate, and this is where I'm at. Shouldn't wrestling be more properly teaching me to hate Arabs or adulterers or something? Why am I allowed to let my mark-ass mind drift into all these grey areas?

~!~

Smackgirl World Remix/Gran Prix 12/19/04
[Dan Herman]

Setsuna, one of our fine Canadian posters requested I review this show back when I was just doing them for the message board and the man among men Menorike came through with a copy for me. This is going to be very dangerous. You see, Smackgirl is women's MMA and while I appreciate these women as athletes, I also have a thing for athletic women... and I also have a thing for aggressive women... and I really have a thing for aggressive, athletic women. So, you know, be prepared to be creeped out or disgusted or whatever.

I am currently in the middle of an apartment search, which is sucking the life out of me, so there's also a chance that this won't come out as good as it might've otherwise. I also know that Smackgirl has some distinctive rules to go along with their distinctive gloves. I don't know what the rules are offhand. The gloves are similar to MMA gloves, but with more padding and a bit of a curve to them. Keep this in mind.

Prior to the matches, they show people riding on a tour bus while some woman in a mask speaks on the PA. This is already awesome.

Yoko Takahashi v. Merloes Coenen: Takahashi comes out to the theme from Ghostbusters. No joke, Ghostbusters. She wears jeans, and a matching red sparkly cowboy hat and vest. I'm not sure what to make of this. The fans like her, though, as she gets the streamer treatment. They spell Merloes "Marlose", but I remember seeing it as Merloes. We're probably both wrong. Coenen has no such fanfare, but is ready to fight nonetheless.

For the feel-out, Coenen tries some fancy kicks while Takahashi opts for leg kicks. As you might imagine, Takahashi gets the better of it but it doesn't last long as she closes the distance, allowing Coenen to land some good punches as well as strikes from the Muay Thai clinch. Takahashi recovers and starts landing some nice jabs. Takahashi is definitely landing more for a moment, but Coenen comes in with a straight through the jab. Coenen pounces into the clinch and sends up a couple of knees that make the ref call for a standing eight count (okay, weird Smackgirl rule #1). After the eight count Coenen comes right in and pounds away for the ref stoppage. Not a bad little stand-up fight, though it was definitely Coenen target practice at points. I wonder if her strategy going in was to take a few shots to get Takahashi's confidence up. She wouldn't be the first, even if I'll never understand that as a plan.

Erin Toughill v. Miwako Ishihara: When asked if she has a target for the tournament, Toughill answers whoever, she'll kick all their asses. As if she wasn't already going to give me a hard time focusing on the fights. They cut back to Takahashi getting checked by doctors during Ishihara's entrance, so I'll assume they're friends. She also gets the Goldberg treatment.

Ishihara does not look happy to be there. Toughill, on the other hand, looks at home. She's got a good six inches on Ishihara as well as a muscular physique to Ishihara's plumpness. I take time away from admiring the tattoos on Toughill's legs to take time away from admiring Toughill's legs to notice that the ref looks like Muta.

The bell rings and Toughill launches a flying knee, which is more of a hopping knee between Ishihara's short stature and Toughill's long legs. She then throws another knee, and then another, and then several more. When she gets tired of that, she starts throwing punches, and then back to the knees. All of these connect with Ishihara's face before the ref comes in, fifteen seconds too late (at least) and calls for a standing eight. Ishihara's corner wisely throws in the towel. Short and brutal, but it gave me a chance to admire Toughill's well rounded, uhm, striking technique.

Shannon Hooper v. Megumi Yabushita: The backstage reporter has to chase Hooper down, where Josh Barnett, Hooper's trainer and paramour, informs her that there will be no interview. Barnett, draped in his NJPW towel, does it instead, and gives the old school competitive pro-wrestling style answers.

Yabushita comes out in a cross between a kimono and a dress inspired by Molly Ringwald movies. Hey! I could've done this for the 80's issue after all. Yabushita definitely has the best ring gear of the tournament so far too, sort of a Tarzan meets glam rock two piece. Hooper has a height advantage here, but Yabushita, unlike Ishihara actually looks like an athlete.

Hooper comes in with strikes and Yabushita quickly dives for a shoot. Hooper sprawls and blocks it and they scramble where Hooper ends up with back control. Hooper has her left under Yabushita while Hooper peppers her with right hands to the ribs. Yabushita grabs on to the nice thick padding of Hooper's glove and does a couple of somersaults, effecting a quasi-kimura and

a tap-out victory. Styles make fights, but so do rules and that's a move that wouldn't work with any other type of glove.

Ana Carolina v. Roxanne Modafferi: Modafferi does her promos in Japanese, the suck-up. Were this battle a representation of The Police's Roxanne battling it out with Junior Byles's "Oh, Carolina" then there would be no need to have this bout as "Roxanne" would be completely outclassed. However, these women are not songs, which is fine because Modafferi deserves better than Sting. She looks like a college girl, young and shy. The kind of girl you might shared a class with and wondered, what's her deal was, but never found out because you never saw her in the dining hall. Well, now I have my answer for all those times I wondered about a girl, but never tracked her down. They were all martial artists and I am a fool for not pursuing them.

They quickly clinch up and Carolina, who, by looks, is the stronger of the two, and definitely the bigger, tries to bull Modafferi around. Modafferi takes it as an opportunity to throw some in-close strikes, landing but not appearing to score. The match goes to the ground when Carolina hits a gutwrench suplex on Modafferi. Modafferi, however, quickly recovers and grabs guard. She said Jiu Jitsu was her strength... or was that something she needed to train in? I don't know. It was the only two words she spoke that I understood. She appears to be moving well, frustrating Carolina and not letting her land anything more than some flailing body shots. A count down breaks out and the ref then stands the fighters up, Smack Girl weird rule #2. Modafferi has more wind when they're on their feet and Carolina seems to do little more than advance and bull Modafferi around. Modafferi really works inside the clinch very well, but I'm left to wonder if that's because of Carolina and not because of Modafferi. Modafferi is landing a number of clean shots and Carolina's head is snapping back, but she keeps walking forward like some unstoppable zombie menace. Carolina manages to bull Modafferi down after a bit in the corner and what follows is some of the saddest grappling from the top I've ever seen. I actually am happy to see a stand-up. Carolina drives Modafferi right back down and gets side control, but can't do anything with it. I entertain myself during this sad exhibition by recounting the faces, sometimes names, of those young women I exchanged quick, flirty glances with back in Ohio before quickly trying to hide where our eyes were pointed. Sitting in the back row of Chinese Thought & Religion or Art History or Sufi Poetry, the collective she probably thought I was confident and dynamic, sitting up in the front row, unafraid to speak up. My confidence didn't survive outside of an academic situation. Who am I? Just a chubby kid with funny hair who takes class seriously. I never realized how well recognized I was on campus, even notorious, but it wouldn't have mattered if I did. My self-image would never match the one put up perpetuating my high school defenses. Look tough. Stand tall. Don't let them smell how afraid you are. It won me the respect of many, but nothing more than shy, furtive glances from women, women who looked and carried themselves like Roxanne, which I could only respond to with more shy, furtive glances.

Round two starts with Modafferi doing some nice striking from outside, but she doesn't quite keep the ring in mind, allowing a frustrated Carolina to literally corner her and then toss her down. Modafferi works for an arm-bar from half-guard and comes close, but ultimately moves to guard right when she gets called up. I'm cursing the countdown after that one. They circle

throwing strikes. Carolina is landing some heavy ones, but Modafferi peppers away. If only she was able to keep the distance better. After a minute of exchanging blows, with Carolina possibly pulling ahead based on the heavyness of her shots, Carolina gets another ugly takedown. More punches, another takedown, Carolina actually attempts a leg-lock, or is it toe hold? I think up more sad nostalgia. "You should have dinner at the co-op sometime," she said, but I never did, there were any number of reasons, none the least of which was that I was intimidated by the pre-existing social structure. I avoided all herds, which made for a lonely life and made it difficult for me to follow up on even the simplest things like an invitation to dinner. The last thirty seconds are just punches thrown, mainly by Modafferi.

Since it's a two-round fight it goes to the judges. If you go along NSAC rules, I think Modafferi is ahead. She landed more and landed some good shots. Carolina landed some strong ones, but Modafferi had several that approached it and nobody really got rocked. Carolina obviously had the takedowns, but she did literally nothing with them. We'll see. Maybe I just feel this way because of the memories Roxanne dug up. Junior Byles and Sting had it backwards. Roxanne, you make a grown man cry. The judges have it unanimously in her favour.

MATCH FIVE: Okay, I don't want to check Sherdog and spoil the result for me, so bear with me here. The first combatant comes out to a techno remix of the Can Can song (not the one from that dreadfully overrated Baz Luhrmann piece of post-modernist vomit) wearing bright pink with white polka dots. Her opponent rocks a bi-colored sho-lo with a sleeveless t-shirt style top. I'll just call them Polka Dot and ShoLo for now and get the names after the match. If that doesn't work for you... then you really haven't been reading the DVDVR all that long, have you? Anyway, ShoLo has some girth on Polka Dot, who may be slightly taller.

There's some flailing striking and ShoLo goes for one of those Judo-throws that Mark Laimon says doesn't work, and he's right this time as Polka Dot gets back control, but ShoLo just stands right up. ShoLo keeps a hold of Polka Dot's head, though and eventually gets the takedown with a trip. Not much of note happens, then they get stood up. More flailing and then Polka Dot reverses a ShoLo takedown attempt. ShoLo clinches with a guard and holds on for the countdown. It looks like her nose is bloody. Wow, go Polka Dot! My excitement doesn't last long, however, as ShoLo gets a takedown and busts out an armbar for the win.

An interesting match that seemed to show why you have weight divisions. The armbar was ShoLo's first sign of skill and even that involved more muscling than skill. Polka Dot is Tama Chan and ShoLo is Kaori Ito. I have a feeling someone is going to post that Kaori Ito was in some dying or defunct women's pro-wrestling group and how could I not know that?

Erin Toughill v. Merloes Coenen: Dear Lord, two buff, leggy brunettes in spandex, both of whom happen to be fast and deadly strikers. It works on so many levels.

The feeling out process barely looks like a feeling out process. Toughill throws combinations. Coenen tries for kicks. After two exchanges, Toughill starts countering to perfection. Coenen throws a looper, Toughill blasts her with a straight. Coenen goes for a push-kick, Toughill

lowkicks her off-target. Coenen tries for a clinch and, when that fails, drops back to use her longer legs to her advantage. She lands a few push kicks, but Toughill still lands some straights. Coenen throws a looper and misses and Toughill grins an evil grin full of mouth-guard and I am in love, but my love means nothing as Coenen goes ovaries out and charges in for a clinch and starts kneeing Toughill in her stomach and head. Toughill definitely takes a few but gets out by swinging wildly. They go back to circling one another. Toughill lands some hard blows, but so does Coenen. They both do a good job of countering one another, but also both take the initiative and charge in. Toughill counters with straights and Coenen counters with clinches and knees. With a minute to go, the ref calls for a stop as Toughill has a cut above her left ear. The doctor lovingly looks it over and the fight continues. Just as I'm about to say that the action has slowed down, Toughill lands a solid right that knocks Coenen to the floor. Toughill goes to pounce, but it's Smackgirl rules and the ref holds her back so Coenen can get a ten count. Coenen gets to her feet before ten, but is saying something to her corner. The ref checks on her, but she shakes it off. Toughill by KO. An excellent fight

On her way back, the camera picks up on Toughill's musings. "I fucking knocked her out! Knocked her out, the fucking bitch." Quite a mouth on her, which is so damn sexy. The cameraman follows Toughill to the back where she's met with a teammate who caught the match on camcorder. She and her team rewatch the KO a few times and the camera catches Toughill smiling her sweet sadistic smile and I, ahem, SETSUNA requested this review and MENORIKE sent me a copy. Don't blame me for being who I am.

They have a post-match with Coenen and she is more of a "man" than most male fighters because she doesn't blame the flu and she doesn't blame jet lag. She just says that Toughill is a better fighter. She starts to say that she didn't want the ref to stop the fight, but then follows it up with, "but it's my fault." I have a ton of respect for both women.

Roxanne Modafferi v. Megumi Yabushita: Before her first match, Modafferi had a look of awkward concern. Now she's wearing a big grin. She's found her home. Yabushita doesn't wear the Ringwald Kimono, but does get her second streamer treatment. Modafferi has about three inches on Yabushita.

Some feeling out strikes don't last long as Modafferi quickly sweeps Yabushita to the ground and gets back control. Yabushita is probably going for the glove-lock, but Modafferi gets full back control with hooks and rolls her over, going for a choke. Yabushita escapes and then escapes an arm-bar just as the countdown ends. When the ref restarts, Yabushita comes running in with a Jet Li kick. They clinch up and Yabushita goes for a Judo throw, but Modafferi recovers and grabs guard on her way over. Modafferi is very active, but it only gives Yabushita a chance to escape. They go to the ground again and this time Yabushita tries for an arm-bar instead of just turtling up and Modafferi roles out of it and rolls her over. Yabushita has a death-grip on the glove, but Modafferi is doing an excellent job of shutting her down, even breaking it before the stand-up countdown ends. Yabushita catches a Modafferi punch and yanks her down by the glove. She definitely has glove techniques down. Modafferi breaks her grip, though and works from the guard, getting a triangle sunk in right before the stand-up, but

then again Yabushita wasn't trying to escape as much as run down the clock. I'm hating that countdown more and more this match. This pretty much brings the round to a close.

So what we have here is Modafferi, who just went through a greuling two-round fight where much of the time was spend holding back a woman who appeared to have considerable weight on her while Yabushita had a quick win with the glove-lock. This round Yabushita was slightly active, mainly on takedowns, while Modafferi didn't stop. One would have to imagine that Yabushita is going to have an edge going into the next round, unless her cardio is really poor or Modafferi's is ultra-Couturian.

Second round and Yabushita comes in for the clinch. Modafferi's second yells at her to fight into it and she regains the clinch technique she showed against Carolina, kneeing away at a Yabushita who pulls back but refuses to let go. Yabushita eventually gets a single leg and Modafferi quickly transitions it into a triangle. Yabushita simply holds her hands together and gets on her knees. She certainly knows how to make use of the rules. Yabushita gets another takedown, but Modafferi starts to get guard and Yabushita pulls away like she's scared of it and Modafferi does the double-foot sweep! Beautiful! That's cupping Yabushita's heels while pushing up with her hips, resulting in her getting mount. Yabushita quickly rolls over and turtles and Modafferi just throws in the hooks and goes for the RNC, but Yabushita knows just where to place her arms where she won't get choked. Once on their feet, Modafferi gets a takedown, but Yabushita gets on a guillotine. It's more of a facelock, but it's more than nothing. Back on their feet and Yabushita tries for a judo throw, but Modafferi just falls back into back control. Yabushita is beginning to realize that she needs to do something on the ground and almost gets a kimura out of the deal. Oddly, Yabushita is looking winded and upset, while Modafferi, while not grinning any more, still looks confident. One minute to go. Once again Yabushita tries an arm throw, but Modafferri just drops into back control. Yabushita has returned to fighting to not lose, though, and it goes to stand-up right at the bell.

Hot damn that was also a good match. As annoying as the clock on the ground is, there was still a lot of nice grappling in there. So much so that I didn't even stop to make leering comments about the participants. Yabushita came alive briefly there, but the ground work was, for the most part, controlled by Modafferi. Yabushita had a slight edge on the strikes, but that was such a small portion of the match. Takedowns were about even, but Yabushita did next to nothing with them and was fighting not to lose while Modafferi was fighting to win. Under Pride rules the fight would go to Modafferi. Under NSAC rules it's closer, but Modafferi would still have an edge. Unfortunately I already know how this match turns out and the judges don't see it my way. Maybe I just don't know the Smackgirl scoring system. Yabushita gets a unanimous decision.

They show clips of a non-tournament match between Yuka Kimura and Seri. Kimura is from Team Purebred, which is Enson Inoue's team, which means she's got to be pure bad-ass. She's in all black, which only further increases that suspicion. Seri wears fancy red and yellow fighting gear, but she's looking tough herself. What they show is a skilled slugfest and, to make this completely rule, it's to a riot-grrl-era-style punk song. Goddamn there was some great music in

the nineties. Kimura won by decision. What they showed was an excellent, skilled slugfest. Then again, they only showed about two minutes, so keep that in mind.

They then show clips of Yuuki Kondo (not the male Pride guy, but a female fighter) tapping out some guy in what I'm guessing was just a grappling match since it isn't listed on either MMA fight database. The ten seconds they show was slick.

Yabushita v. Erin Toughill: The round starts and Yabushita shoots in right away. Toughill sprawls and Yabushita grabs the glove, but Toughill gets back control and neutralizes the glove-lock attempt. On their feet Toughill uses her reach advantage and holds the outside. Yabushita backs into a corner and Toughill comes in with a knee which lands, but also gets caught for a takedown, though Toughill is on top with Yabushita clutching at her from underneath. Yabushita gets the glove and almost gets the glove lock, but Toughill just muscles her up and Yabushita's grip gives way. Yabu recovers enough for a desperation trip and ends up in Toughill's guard, clutching at her knees to get a neutral stand-up. Back up Toughill lands some strikes, but Yabushita comes in for a clinch and another takedown. Like before, she's on her knees and Toughill has back control, but Yabushita's deathgrip on the glove is sunk in. Toughill throws some vicious elbows into Yabushita's spine and the ref breaks it up since that's illegal and gives Toughill a yellow card. The doctor checks on Yabushita and she can't continue, but since it was because of Toughill's illegal blows, it's ruled a DQ win for Yabushita.

There was a lot of controversy about this tournament. The first question related to whether or not Yabushita's glove-lock was legal. The Smackgirl officials said it was, although Josh Barnett disagreed. Going into the tournament, Barnett warned Hooper about it, so it was known that she does it and isn't disqualified. Sometimes you have to prepare for the rules as enforced, not the rules as written. Knowing that Yabushita was allowed to do this move consistently, I can't fault her for using it. I can fault her for not having any other move, but her opponents should make her pay for it. I can fault the judges for giving her the decision over Modafferi. I can't say Yabushita was wrong for using a move she was consistently allowed to use.

The elbows to the back were blatantly illegal. Toughill admits that she knows this in the post-match and even apologizes for it. Barnett did a commentary where he basically wrote it off as saying two wrongs make a right. I don't agree. Toughill used a strike that was known to be illegal and known to be enforced as illegal. When Yabushita couldn't continue, a DQ win or no-contest were the only reasonable choices and I don't see the DQ being unreasonable. Toughill claimed that Yabushita was acting to get the DQ, but the only one who knows for sure is Yabushita. I remember reading that she was hospitalized, but I don't remember for certain. Either way, in the end, I don't see Yabushita's winning by DQ as a questionable or controversial decision. Of course, if Erin were standing in front of me I'd say, "of course you deserved the win, please don't hurt me without learning my safeword first."

OVERALL:

Once out of the first round, and even at points during, this was a really solid card. Toughill/Coenen was a nice strikefest. Modafferi brought some slick groundwork against

Yabushita. There's definitely something for everyone without having to resort to male piggishness.

Of course, if male piggishness is what you're looking for, well Toughill's smoking hot and most men would agree on that, I think. The other women are all attractive in their own way too, depending on your taste. I've never been attracted to a Japanese woman (don't know why, it's just never worked out that way), but I'm sure someone with the slightest bit of Asiaphilia would have Yabushita haunting their dreams.

The women, those who made the semis anyway, are amazing athletes and had good fights regardless of gender and that's why I'm recommending this tape. If Toughill happens to have sexy legs and Modafferi reminds me of women I knew in college, well that's just an added extra. I don't think that's belittling them. I think it's acknowledging something I'd be lying if I denied. I'm not criticizing someone for being ugly despite them putting on a good performance and I never would.

So yeah, fight fans should see this, especially ones who are sad men like me. Even though the semis were great fights which meant fewer creepy comments from me, you probably know more about me than you ever wanted to know. Remember, blame Setsuna and Menorike. It's their fault.

~!~

When Gagne Met Backlund, 1977
[AG]

See, it's not about the lonesome sound
of a railway whistle
or your mother's sad eyes
when she tells you how dad felt
before the war
and the bruises
and the belt and suspender
foreplay.
Nothing carnal here should come
to mind.

What it's about is America,
the majesty of her tri-colored flag.
Paper or plastic
paper or plastic
there next to the pipes
in the collar and elbow
display case.

Clean break.
I never wanted to.

The crowd applauds the
Clean Break.
Be a man.
Stand up for freedom.

Heated exchange
forty two minutes in.

No stars
no decorative impulse
nothing but Edina Hammond St. Paul
quivering from the chemo
or is it ecstasy Chitown Kansas City
or is it the working over
of alabaster arms?

Or is it about America?
Tumbling canisters of whole-wheat
grain, siloed
behind the Lutheran cemetery
as dour as
six months
nine months
full-term
to live.

So much depends on
sweat glistening off pale limbs
under arena

[light]
Not much light in headlocks
or the dark dreams of drunken men
in their Detroit rock metal hurtling
down tractor-ridden two lanes
singing their songs
of hurting too long
of honky-tonk women
and truck-stop orgasm
and the uncommon touch

of a most common man.

Who will do your step test now, Bobby Boo?

What you gonna do

when Gregggy Gee

is come for you? [END ITEM]

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NWA World Junior Heavyweight Title Tournament - 11/12/83 - Manila, Phillipines

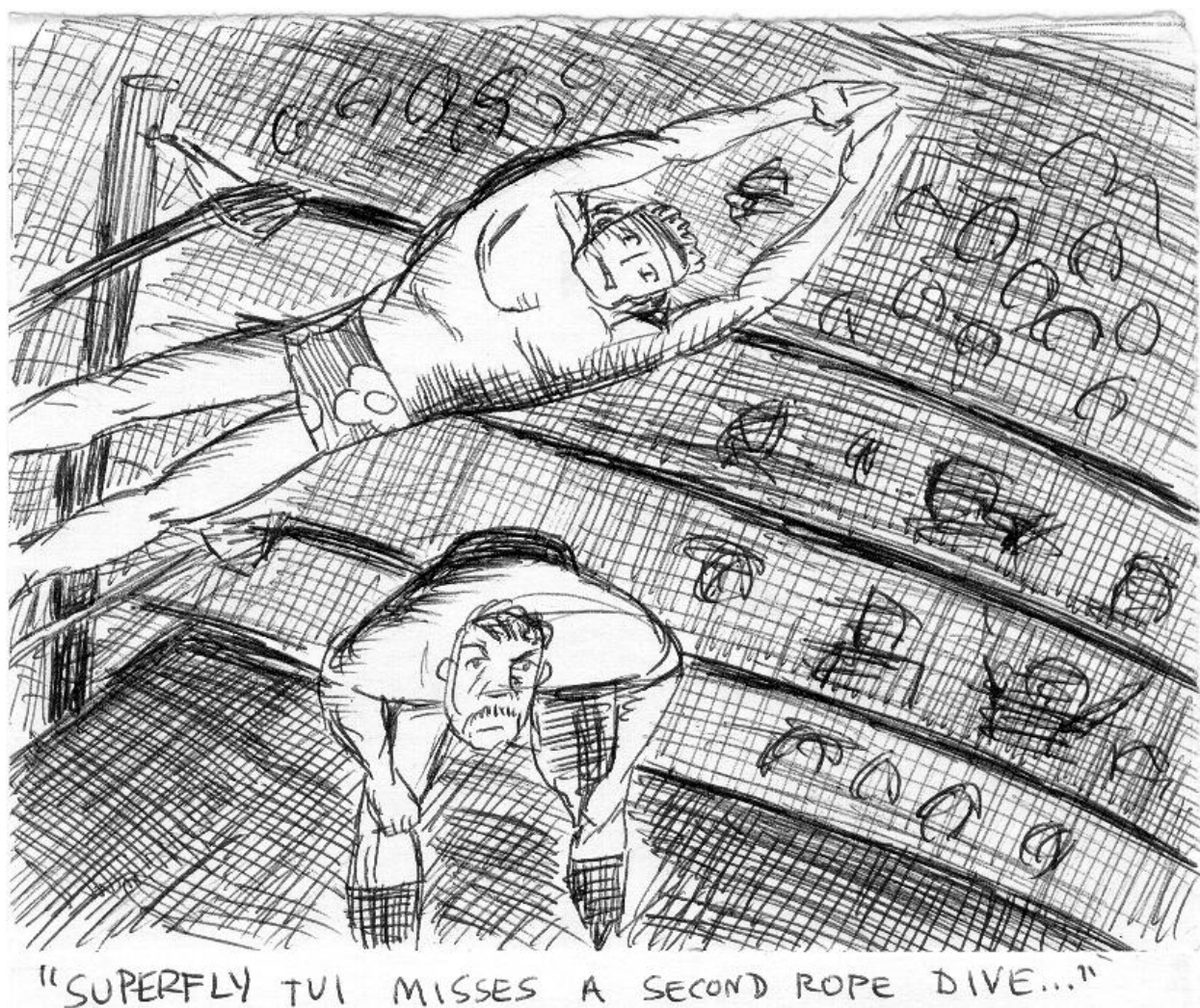
[RAVEN MACK/DEAN RASMUSSEN/AG]

People complain about the treatment of cruiserweights nowadays, but back in the Great Beyond that was like twenty years ago, the Greatest Cruiserweights were basically the glorified jobbers of weekly television. In fact, the psyche of the smaller man was so crushed that the title belt he could maybe win, were he a team player within the NWA political structure as well as a quality wrestler, was the JUNIOR Heavyweight belt. Even Light Heavyweight sounds better than that. Yet still this title floats around the current indy circuit in today's barely meaningful NWA political structure...

Ahh, politics. It is a word I hate because basically it means, "I'll compromise this thing I believe in if, in return, you compromise this thing you believe in." But both in government and wrestling, we see that term "politics" all too often. And in late 1983, the two cross-sectioned in wrestling's lightweight version of The Thrilla in Manila. Less than three months earlier, the massively popular Benigno Aquino Jr. had been assassinated in the Phillipines, and folks, who had been growing quietly tired, were empowered to be visibly upset with the regime of Ferdinand Marcos. Part of his early attempts at calming the storm he had stirred up with a high-profile political murder, was to allow the major production of a wrestling card to happen on the island.

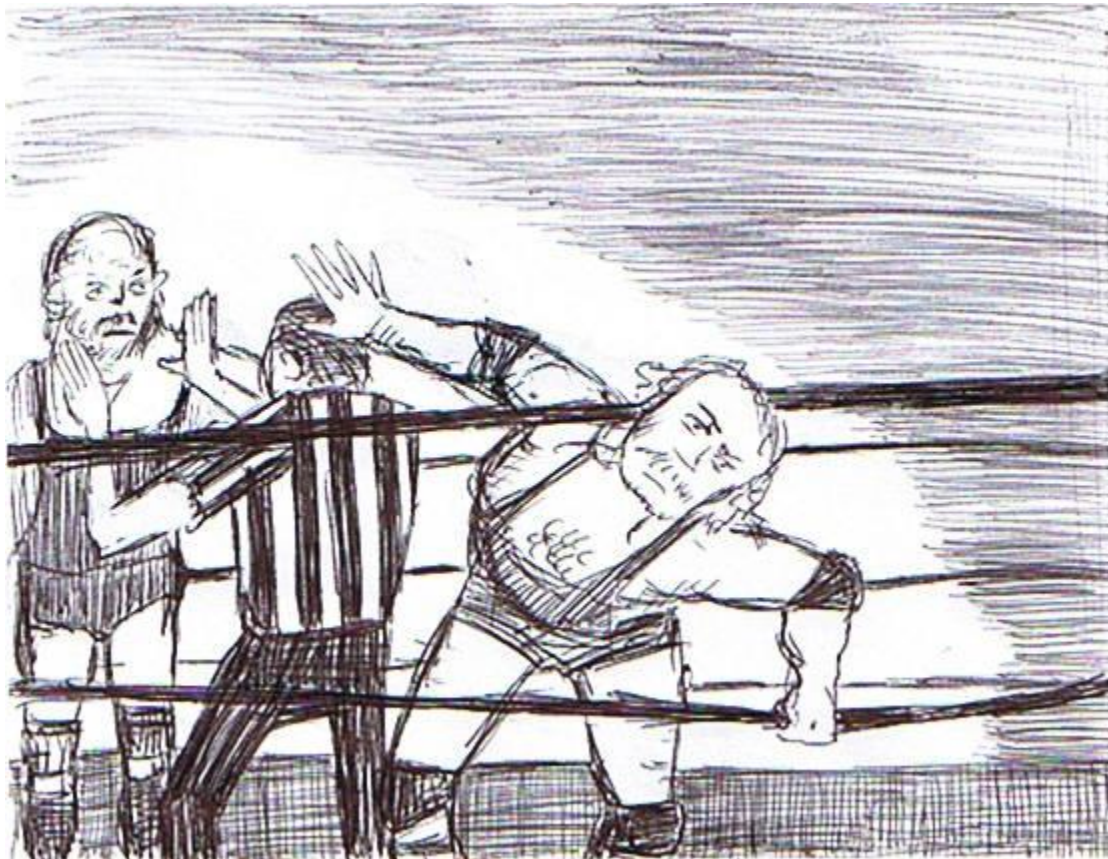
At the same time, wrestling politics was in full-swing. The original Tiger Mask had been the NWA World Junior Heavyweight champion in 1982, but some, not all of the NWA cartel of promoters stopped recognizing him as champion when he wrestled for the WWF. The title, as held by Tiger Mask was vacated and re-instituted in Japan, seemingly outside of the jurisdiction of the American NWA Board of Directors, and this happened a couple of times over the next twelve months. In the fall of 1983, The Cobra, aka George Takano, defeated Davey Boy Smith in Tokyo to lay claim to the title. This was at the point Stampede became intertwined politically sexually with the WWF, which made the NWA play hate on that, and refuse to accept any legitimacy. However, a Polynesian promoter (where wrestling was still huge back then), bankrolled by American NWA promoter bigwigs, put together a major show in Manila, featuring one of Harley Race's last title defenses (against Lars Anderson) before losing his title to Ric Flair at the original Starrcade a week-and-a-half later, as well as an 8-man tournament to crown an undisputed NWA World Junior Heavyweight champion. However, it was not George Takano, but rather Steve Collins under The Cobra outfit in this shindig. But more on that later.

My old friend Tony Erba from Cleveland, who's in like a thousand bands, the most notable of which is probably The Gordon Solie Mother Fuckers, and the most recent of which is probably Stepsister, though I can never keep up with that guy, but he used to send me boxes of tapes that to this day I haven't watched all of. Digging through some old crates the other weekend, I came across one marked "POLYNESIAN BULLSHIT" and was just having it on the TV screen with no sound while I played Madden on the computer and listened to Al Green when, after a few glances, I realized I had some weird "junior" heavyweight bullshit to watch. So here's how it was.

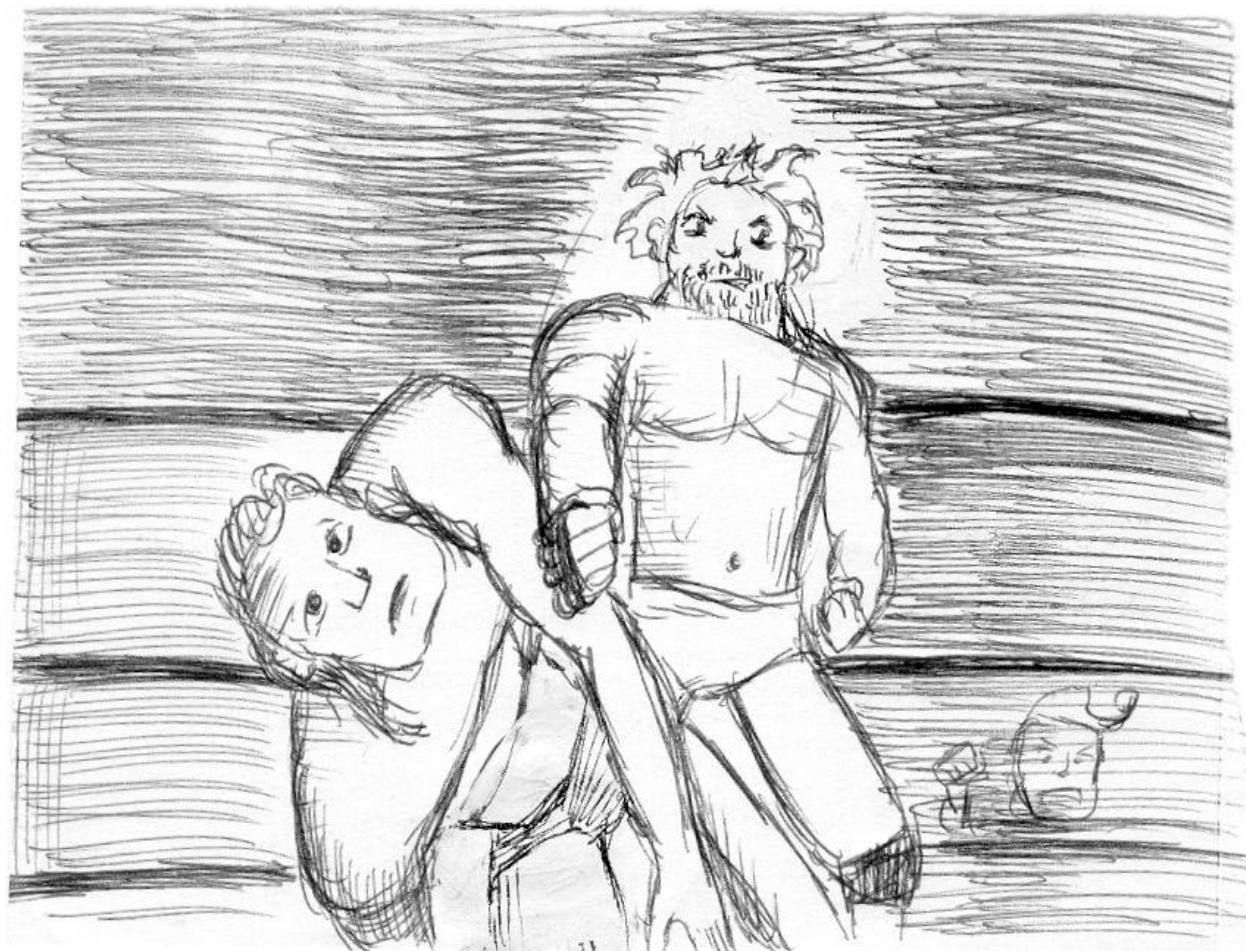


Superfly Tui vs. Hector Guerrero: I think Tui was a heel in Hawaii, but he comes out pretty restrained, followed by Hector Guerrero coming out yelling at old people and cursing at babies. I love the Guerrero family, and I love seeing Guerrero family footage from long ago, as they have always seemed to be a family who is good at acknowledging the fans' cheers, but far better at drawing out the fans' hatred. Tui, being a heel regularly, did a good job in this match of not

acting like a dork-ass babyface, but just being an island wrestler very nonchalantly representing the Pacific Ocean against Guerrero. The early international lucha experience is evident as Tui goes high a lot of times, and Guerrero acts a dick when he's not taking the high bumps and brings it to the ground with armbars he accentuates with eye gouges while the stupid ref is not pointing his eyes in the right direction. Tui misses a second-rope dive, and Guerrero grabs him in the suplex set-up, knees him in the nuts, and rolls him into a small package for the first-round victory.



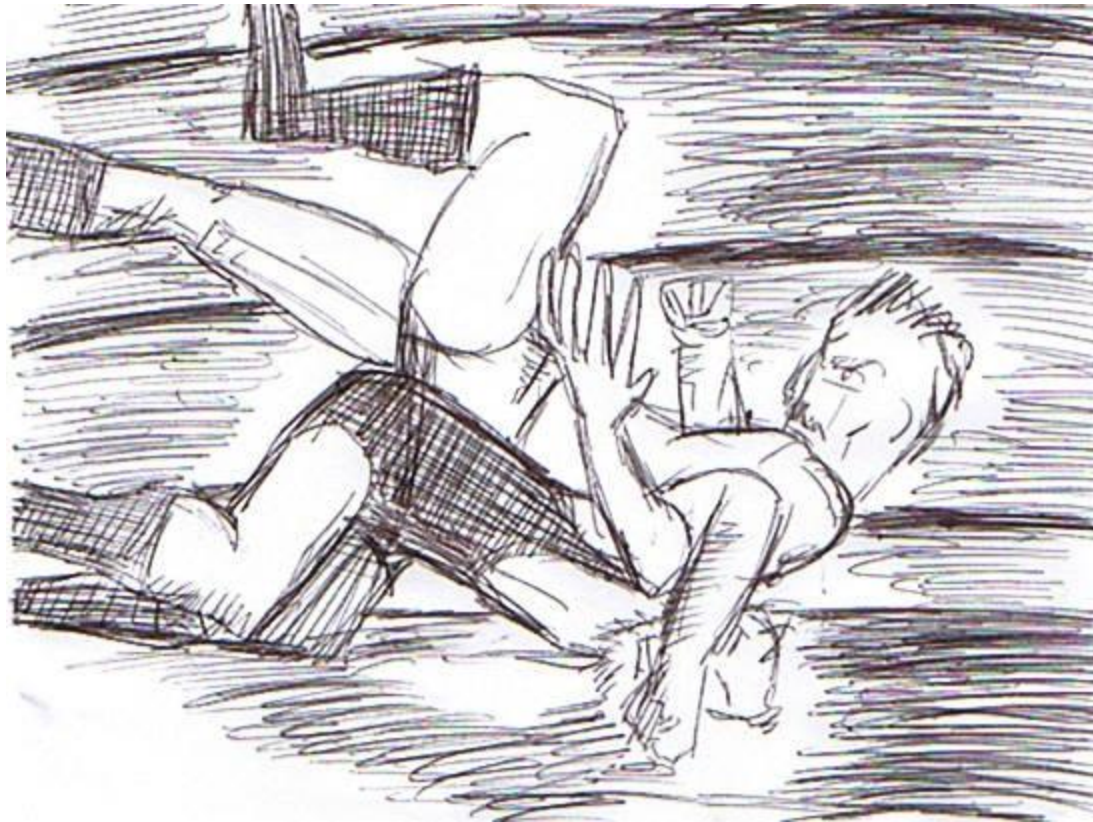
Mike Jackson vs. Gary Royal: Mike Jackson was a Georgia regular then, and is as non-descript as ever. Gary Royal had been a manager type in St. Louis at times, and looked like a low-rent Ray Stevens. Jackson was as bald and technically proficient as ever, which is boring to me, and would've been to the crowd, but Royal was the perfect cocksucker playboy stalling-ass heel, knowing he was outclassed, trying to avoid actual battle. This match was mostly stalling, in fact, as once they finally got into a serious set of moves, Jackson went for one of those sunset flips where the heel was grabbing the top rope (this was after probably a VERY HEELISHLY SLOW ten minutes), and the ref kicked his hands loose, and Jackson actually got the three-count from that.



Denny Brown vs. Eric Embry w/ El Fabuloso Blondy: Eric Embry is one of my all-time favorite wrestlers that I've probably only seen like 10 matches from, but love because he's Pro Wrestling Illustrated-weird. And Denny Brown was THE glorified face jobber for a large chunk of my Mid-Atlantic Championship Wrestling viewing period as a kid. This match was a very formulaic old school wrestling match, though Embry's facial expressions, looking back at Ken Timbs (Blondy) while Timbs smacked the apron, made it far better than it actually was. Basically, they start technical, with the usual even-even exchanges, except unlike today's bullshit let's-face-off-and-get-the-crowd-to-give-us-a-cheap-clap period, Brown and Embry gave it a babyface taking the last advantage emphatically exclamation point. So Embry started "stretching" the rules, yet Denny Brown would always end up on top at the end of the sequence, and Timbs would smack or jump on the apron in frustrated protest. Finally, Brown pulls off an almost-three-count on a small package out of an errant Embry haymaker, and Timbs jumps up on the apron, smacking the top ropes, distracting the ref, and Embry pulls out a pair of brass knucks from his trunks, knocks out Brown, and does the ol' toss right by the ref's head bit to his manager, which looks fake as fuck, because you would figure an actual sports referee would have good enough peripheral vision to catch something like that, and Embry moves on to the semi-finals.



Les Thornton vs. The Cobra: Cobra was a Japanese sensation at this point, but in Manila, it was Steve Collins under the mask as opposed to the real The Cobra - George Takano. Doing a little google searching, it seems that Collins was the Polynesian Jr. champ at this point, and though he wasn't down with faking another dude's gimmick under a mask, he did so with the promise that Thornton would win and come to Hawaii in January of the following year, after a tour of the southeast U.S. to build the title back up on American TV, and drop the strap to Collins. He obviously got fucked over. I was bored about thirteen seconds into this match, and took the time to piss off the front porch as well as grab another two beers out of the refrigerator in the kitchen and throw my empty cans into the recycling bin. Every time I walked past the TV screen, Thornton and The Cobra seemed to be rolling around. Thornton won at some point while I shot my last four bottle rockets out of an empty beer can while being sidetracked during a drop-off at the recycling bin.



Hector Guerrero vs. Mike Jackson: Oh man oh man. Guerrero and Jackson fly over to the Third World and decide to bring the hateful nasty wrestling that made it what it became in the U.S. of A. Jackson is attempting to keep the purity of title tournament in order, going for the respectable collar-and-elbows and clean breaks, but Hector is having none of it, because he's the cock in this here cock-and-buddy game (one guy's a cock, the other's your buddy, which transcends nationality). You can see Jackson gradually become more and more frustrated with Guerrero's cheating ways, but he holds himself together, though it obviously gets harder each time. This is the point, and what makes it great wrestling when done right regardless of whether you speak the same language as the wrestlers or even if the wrestlers speak the same language as each other... Mike Jackson is struggling to overcome a stacked deck, and it is something I'm sure the people of the Phillipines at that time completely understood, though they wouldn't have even seen this match had their benevolent dictator allowed them the opportunity. Finally, Mike Jackson has had all the cans stand and he can't stand no more and he brings the punches. And Hector responds. And when done where it makes sense and it looks good, the best wrestling match on earth (or in Manila) could be just two dudes standing there center-ring trading fisticuffs. Jackson uses an advantage gained in the pugilism to start stretching Guerrero around the mat, and eventually tries to bring it all back to the pure athletic title tournament purity with a nifty little sideways back slide thing, even hooking Hector's leg with his own, but Hector shimmeys out of it at two, flips Jackson on his back, and pulls-the-old feet on the second rope bit to get the pin, and smirks his way out the ring just ahead of the crushed flying drink cups, like any good old school heel would do. A beautiful motherfuckin' match.

Eric Embry vs. Les Thornton: Repeat the Brown/Embry formula, with Ken Timbs ringside to act as Embry's special weapon in this tourney. After about seven minutes of Thornton barely escaping multiple bamboozlements though, Denny Brown returns to run Ken Timbs back to the dressing room, leaving it one on one. You know what happens next... Eric Embry gets that head-shaking, "I'm sorry man, I didn't mean none of it," look, and Thornton brings a quick flurry of punches, laying Embry out, and going for the big kneedrop to finish it. (I went back to check Thornton's first match, and that's how he won; I guess that was his super destructor.) Embry moves, and rakes the eyes, and then lays on a beatdown, for Thornton to rally back, lay him out, and tease another kneedrop finish, repeat pattern. Finally, Thornton nails the kneedrop and gets the semi-final win. It was good for what it was, but went longer than I cared for.

Hector Guerrero vs. Les Thornton: Oddly enough, they wrestled a straight-up technical match, with very little cheating on Guerrero's part, though they did trade punches a number of times. I guess they wanted to protect the sanctity of the NWA World Junior Heavyweight Title. Thornton won, with the kneedrop. The World Jr. title came back from Japan to America in a screwy way, but there was Thornton, on WTBS the SuperStation, proudly wearing that belt as a glorified jobber a couple of weeks later.

And three years later, Ferdinand Marcos and his shoe fetish wife ran out of eye rakes to hold down the babyface comeback, and they got run off to the dressing room of exile in Hawaii. Benigno Marcos Jr.'s daughter Corazon became President, and the Phillipines rolled into a much more democratic era of being a bunch of broke motherfuckers on an island. The NWA World Junior Heavyweight title has never been defended there since, which seems a real shame.

~@~

CLASSIC ST LOUIS WRESTLING, VOL 3 [DEAN RASMUSSEN]

Kinda got sidetracked on these babies but here's volume 3. Larry Matysik still has the hilarious midwest accent. The wrestling is violent.

This is all 1979ish, I believe.

Rufus R Jones vs Billy Howard: After they show an interview with Lou Thesz, Matysik tells us before it started that Jones won because he cut the tape machine off early. So the Billy Howard Surprise Push never actually happened. Rufus R Jones was my favorite wrestler when I was 9. Bill Howard was always getting his ass kicked by whoever he was in the ring with in Mid-Atlantic so this brings back memories. Rufus crushes Howard's arm and makes with the headbutts and he wiggles his legs and I think did this same match on tv every week on Mid-Atlantic television from 1975 to 1979. Howard elbows him in the head! THE HEAD! His HARD HARD HEAD! Rufus does some armdrags and there ya go. Goddam Matysik not thinking that a Rufus R

Jones squash was worth more than the useless kayfabe yammering of Lou Thesz on commentary.

Rocky Johnson vs Max Blue/Bill White/ Gil Guerrerro: These are highlights of Rocky Johnson hitting dropkicks and winning with stuff. Johnson was my favorite wrestler when I was 11. He was flashy like you want your favorite wrestler to be when you've switched over to Rocky Johnson from Rufus R Jones. I love how his finisher would change from the Backbreaker to the Vertical Suplex depending on how fat the enhancement talent was.

Dick Murdock vs Spike Huber: Huber is what you would get with the offense of Brian Pillman with the goofy midwestern whiteness of Buck Rock n Roll Zhumoff. Murdock fucking rules because he bumps all over the ring for Dick The Bruiser's son-in-law before beating the living fuck out of him. I LOVE the running bodyslam when Murdock drives his shoulder into Huber's stomch and slowly rolls through. And then busting his brain. They cut it off before the inevitable save by Dick the Bruiser thus rendering its inclusion a little pointless.

King Kong Brody vs Abdullah the Butcher: This is a handheld from a spot show in Dupo, Illinois and Matysik is doing the commentary without crowd noise. It's kinda cool that even at spot shows, these two would spray blood all over the building. But if there isn't insane Puerto Ricans ripping the chairs out of the floor at Roberto Clemente stadium in intense hatred of Abdullah, you don't really need to see this. Somehow, though Abdullah was Black and had a cool gimmick, he was never my favorite wrestler when I was a child for some reason.

Judy Martin vs Winona Littleheart: Once again Littleheart is attractive in a 1970s CB Radio Based Movie kind of way. Martin wears one of those 70s bathing suits that my mother would wear and it just creeps me out. Martin has cool punches. Martin uses evil to wear down Littleheart but I like her clubbing forearms far more. The ass-stomping aspect of her offense fits into the St Louis style better. The choking mid-bodyslam before hotshotting Littleheart was neat. Martin knows the drill when Littleheart goes into full Youghblood Indian Babyface Onslaught. Martin cuts her off and does the kicks in the corner that reminds me waaay too much of being on Air Force bases in the Midwest in the 70s with leathery drunken barfly wives lounging around in those lawnchairs that they don't make anymore, swilling Coors and eating cream cheese rolled up in pressed beef. If there was Steve Miller playing over top of this, it would take directly to Little Rock Air Force Base in 1977. Meanwhile, on the other end of the Lost Women Archtypes Of The 70s, the flying cross-body by the living embodiment of a Heart song from the first album gets her the flashpin and we cut away.

David Von Erich/ Ted DiBiase vs Dick Murdock/ Baron Von Raschke: Murdock spends the first part selling the pain to the center of his own buttock as they base the first half of the match around DiBiase and Murdock trying to Atomic Drop each other. The other big story is the battle of the Iron Claw versus the Brain Claw! Von Raschke gives a truly hilarious explanation of the nuances of his own claw to warrant giving it the name The Brain Claw. Von Raschke is fucking great- he's such a spaz, his head bobbing when he gets punched, his weird girly legs flailing around while fighting out of a headlock- plus he can't actually control his hand when he can't let

go of Murdock's head when he misses when applying the claw. The meat of the match is Murdock and DiBiase beating the living dogshit out of each other between bouts of Germanic weirdness and Murdock's ass being hurt in ways that I don't want to think about. God, Murdock punching DiBiase is fuckin' THE PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING THAT I READ ABOUT. David Von Erich was a great babyface and could trade punches with a motherfucker like Murdock and look like he wouldn't completely get his ass kicked. There is so much of Murdock on offense that this might be my favorite match on the four discs of the St Louis series that I've seen. Plus the fact that DiBiase is so fucking great selling an assbeating and then doling an assbeating. Raschke bumps like a little German freak for David and they do the hilarious fight out of the claw that me and my oldest son play for hours on end. This is definitely my favorite match that ever implemented the Claw so many times- including the hilarious DOUBLE IRON CLAW ACTION at one point. It's a cool dichotomy of this match: you buy every punch and elbow by Murdock and DiBiase and you don't buy a SECOND of any of the Claws. Murdock and DiBiase take it to the floor and DiBiase shows you how to properly punch a North Texan in the face. Von Erich is all bobbleheaded as he cuts off David after a sweet standing dropkick by the eldest Von Erich. Raschke's punches suck because they are within feet of DiBiase and Murdock's and to a lesser extent David's. At the 15 minute mark DiBiase and Murdock just punch each other to death and they have the double finishers as Murdock is in the Figure Four and Von Erich procures the Claw on the Baron. They double Atomically Drop the Baron and the Baron is absolutely hilarious selling his Teutonic Corn Shoot in agony. With three minutes left, the Baron opts for a Keylock sequence. Von Erich Iron Claws out of the hold and catches Murdock with the stomach claw off the top. And it's really stupid looking. DiBiase comes in and Murdock fucking MAULS him with evil: chewing on his face, gouging his eyes, pile-driving him. And the time limit draw saves DiBiase. The finish is funny because Tom and Phil were telling me that the funny thing about the 80s WWF matches is that they have so many visual pins and time limit saves for the HEELS. Here, in Mushnick's St Louis- the best booked stuff on earth- has the visual pin after the piledriver by the heel. Postmatch, Von Erich is hilarious mispronouncing everything. Then he gets all homo-erotic: "I have been through ze fire and vat ze fire does not destroy IT HARDENS! I AM HARDENED AND TOUGH, YOUNG TENDER DAVID VON ERICH!" Fuck yeah, Baron.

Kerry Brown vs Ken Patera: And this would be every Ken Patera heel squash I ever saw in Mid-Atlantic. It makes me want to see the test of strength challenge with Tony Atlas again.

Killer Karl Kox/ Bulldog Bob Brown vs Pat O'Conner/ Tommy Yates: After reading about Killer Karl Kox in the lost sleaze thread, I no longer fear death. Kox is beautiful in this, being a true glass-eye-hidden-in-his-buttcheeks ass-stomper giving O'Conner the business in the corner. O'Conner rules as the prototype for Bullet Bob Armstrong's latter day career. Kox is a dick to Bulldog Bob Brown by pulling Brown off Yates and killing Yates with a Brainbuster to get the pin himself. They don't really go into why there is friction between the diminutive little bulldog and the Man with a Glass Eye Hidden In his Foreskin after such a brief match. So we move on.

Wendy Richter/ Ted DiBiase vs Bulldog Bob Brown/ Vivian St John: Hey! Wendy Richter! We had a discussion about Bulldog Bob Brown last time I was over at Tim's watching tapes. It

seems Cornette and I guess Meltzer were commenting about how it was weird that he pushed for so long since he wasn't physically impressive at all. He could work though and had good facial expressions and he was from Canada so for the 70s he was exotic. I would think that would be reason enough. I mean, it explains Jacques Goulet and Lord Alfred Hayes's pushes in Texas at the same time. Goddamn. Vivian St John is a PIECE. Tall, redhead, Canadian, all chokes and kicks. Fuck yeah, pardner, I'm spent. Bob kicks Wendy after Viv accidentally smacks Bob as Ted gets even more incensed- as Vivian cheats more than any who ever wrestled. God, if I was in Missouri in 1979, I would so be Vivian St John's 12 year old stalker. LOVE ME. LOOOOOOVE ME. And she would drag me out from behind the bushes and break my camera and use some kind of carny shoothold to snap the tendons in my jacking off hand and it wouldn't end well. Maybe it was for the best that I was 12 in Virginia where there were no attractive red-headed Canadian women anywhere. At least my hand still works. (Wendy Richter gets the roll-up, but we all know who should have won.) Postmatch, Richter and St John try to kill each other and I fight off my 1973 wrestling mag apartment wrestling shameful boner.

Ken Patera vs Tommy Yates: I should have watched this, but I instead looked up Vivian St John on Google and somewhere there is a tape of her against Rustee the Foxx- who is the Virginia woman wrestler that me and all my friends in college were in love with when we would go see wrestling at the Mechanicsville Showplace Annex in the late 80s. I sooo got to see that. I'll stop right there.

David Von Erich vs Bobby Jagger: Bobby Jagger, DADDY! Hangman Bobby Jagger wasn't nearly as fat as he became in 1988 in Puerto Rico the last we saw of him here in the land of the Death Valley Driver Video Review. David Von Erich works a headlock spot really well. He's tall so he cinches it in impressively and when he gets shot into the ropes, he is so athletic that it's all fast and highspottish. Jagger is fucking awesome with the AWA elbow drop that misses. David goes back to the headlock and Jagger slams his head into the turnbuckle to break it and then cheats like Bobby Jagger to break him down. I love his elbow to the head. Von Erich works the arm and Jagger is like Buddy Rose, masterfully doing the little bumps to make the armwringer look all hateful. Jagger is basing the match around his secret use of his taped thumb to the throat. Von Erich and Jagger trade punches to the face and it's fucking great. Man, why did David Von Erich have to die? He was so good at professional wrestling at such a young age. God, it's goddam shame. His fire as a babyface is awesome and you don't get that from every guy who came down the pike. Jagger crushes his skull with nasty old school elbows and Von Erich draws you into the match with the pain on his face. I guess there's all kinds of shit we will all get explanations for when we break free of this mortal coil. Fuck, I want to see anyone in wrestling today gather the heat that Von Erich gets when Jagger gets him in a chinlock. David Von Erich gets the claw on Jagger and Jagger fucking RIPS HIS OWN HEAD OPEN and blood splatters all over the ring. Jagger and 70s wrestling fucking rules. Beautiful testimony of the waste of youth in wrestling in the 1980s.

Kerry Brown/ Pat O'Conner vs Baron Von Raschke/ Dick Murdock: Murdock plus O'Conner is always fun. Murdock beats the fuck out of Kerry Brown and mauls him outside the ring. God, Did Brown drink his last Coors or something? O'Conner eventually makes the hot tag and we

finally get Murdock and O'Conner... and it's fuckin beautiful. Baron wins eventually with a Claw on Brown but one wonders why Brown didn't carve his head up to get over Baron's claw.

Hell, you want this for the Vivian St John moments alone. Uuuung, sweet Jesus...

~!~

INDY SPOTLIGHT: Chikara Pro
[RAVEN MACK]

Lucha Libre has done me well over the last five or six years of my life. Whenever I give up on the wrestling from time to time, the sweet simple style of the lucha libre keeps me at least leaving the door cracked for wrestling to completely re-enter my heart. Like many, I was initially drawn in by the campiness of colorful masks and crazy characters doing weird flips and flops while old referees wearing headbands to hold back longhair waved their finger side-to-side in a mannerism never really seen in America.

I have wanted to check out Chikara in it's full lucha-infused glory for a while now, but only caught bits and pieces here or there. You never know what you'll get when you watch an American "lucha" promotion, because it might be heartfelt appreciation of the lucha libre, or it might just be some artfags in funny masks having shitty wrestling matches. It's like Mexican restaurants - most are authentic in the sense they have bland food but bright decorations and color schemes and a Zapata's girlfriend mural and white people will come drink margaritas there. My favorite Mexican restaurants have always been hole-in-the-wall dumps that you walk in and everyone looks shocked a white dude would come in, and the menu has steak and you order it and it comes covered with green peppers and onions simmered in fat to soft perfection, and there's rice and beans that has whole beans in it, with that thick texture you only get from using dry beans, not the shit that's been sitting in a can full of corn syrup for seven months. Most American lucha libre is authentic like the former - bland wrestling compensated by bright masks and crazy names. Chikara, on paper, definitely looks like it would be that, but I trust the master planning of Mike Quackenbush. I used to enjoy watching him and Reckless Youth forever try to fuck each other up on public access television in Richmond years ago (thanks to Tim Noel), and Quack has wrestled El Hijo Del Santo. So I trust him.

Darkness Crabtree/ Shirley Doe vs. Ebessan/ Billy Ken Kid - 02/18/05: Crabtree and Doe is such an absolutely strange pairing. Of course, Doe has to work the brunt of the match because Darkness is painfully slow as a gimmick, and Ebessan vs. Darkness Crabtree locking up and running a slow-mo spot is one of those most amazingly beautiful sleazy weird spectacles that you can only find in the professional wrestling. Then Crabtree goes into super-meth speed against Billy Ken Kid, riling up the crowd, thrown out the ring and back to his slow gait with hands shaking by his sides like the 500-year-old man he purports to be. Medications and heart attacks and comedic shining wizard teases and "look over there" trickery, it all leads to good fun.

Darkness Crabtree vs. USApe - 03/18/05: I love wrestling set in the main rooms of VFW Halls, complete with gaudy curtains and ceiling tile. Darkness Crabtree is great - he is the exaggerated

wrestling embodiment of my own grandfather who once rhetorically asked and answered me, "What'd you get for Christmas? A punch in the nose?" And USApe is billed as a "patriotic primate powerhouse". Holy fuck. You know how I said sometimes lucha libre is just artfags in crazy masks having shitty matches? If your average artfag could dream up something as twistedly brilliant as a Darkness Crabtree vs. USApe match, then I'd spend the rest of my life enjoying shitty matches featuring guys wearing crazy masks. If I paid attention correctly, Crabtree was slowly walking out one door then walking back in a second door like two or three times while the ape was running around the building, until finally they locked up ringside.

Okay, USApe mimics Hogan, doesn't get the win, and Crabtree gets thrown into the corner, walking slowly and tediously rather than being whipped all Irish-like, but then gets viciously tossed with a monkey flip. And that's your pin. Easily, the greatest match I've seen in months.

Hallowicked/ UltraMantis Black vs. Kanjyouru Matsuyama/ The Kabuki Kid - 05/20/05: Kabuki Kid cuts a great backstage broken English promo about how Japanese wrestlers are the greatest, then his partner sticks out a green tongue. The Chikara ring is one of those great low-budget deals that's only like 18 inches off the ground; I would hope that Hallowicked and UltraMantis Black star in a movie of a similar budget, taking a '69 Chevelle Supersport cross country to win back the girl, Sondra Locke Jr., who caused Hallowicked to hide behind a mask in the first place.

Match starts with fun Japanese dudes out-fasting and flip-kicking the masked American monsters. But then UltraMantis Black gets to get all stiff shitty with his elbows upside the head of Matsuyama to bring it back to wrestling. Kabuki Kid is ridiculously and wonderfully enthusiastic, nailing some nice fluid moves.

Ahh... I see why Matsuyama had a green tongue. He blows mist, but Hallowicked ducks and The Kabuki Kid takes a faceful of poison.

Jigsaw/ Mike Quackenbush/ Reckless Youth vs. Chris Hero/ Claudio Castagnoli/ Arik Cannon - 05/21/05: I guess I'm as much of a Reckless Youth mark as a drunken nerd could admit to being, so it's good to see the dude on my video machine again doing the professional wrestling. Hero and Quack are gonna start, but it's all bullshit as Hero heelishly tags out to Claudio, avoiding even a collar-and-elbow lock-up with Quackenbush. Quackenbush is about the most normal looking guy ever in amazingly swank shiny pants, and I heartily enjoy him continually getting wrestling blue balls treatment from his nemesis Chris Hero. Reckless and Cannon are in, and Reckless does some real nice armbar-happy matwork. And it's a lucha match, so Hero and Jigsaw have the final of the three initial face-offs, with some nice weird armbar stuff as well. Claudio continues to impress me, able to make even stupidly unbelievable lucha bumps seem realistic through post-bump selling.

The technicos work a sick-ass triple team segment on Cannon, culminating in him being stretched in a Reckless camel clutch and taking Quack's foot to his fat little anarchist hog jowls.

Eddie Kingston on commentary is really good, too. My first taste of him was on the Samoa Joe/Necro Butcher match, and he took away more than he added, plus sounded kind of bumbling. But hearing him on some of this Chikara stuff makes me understand him doing commentary more.

There's a lot more sweet, goofy maneuverings in this match than I can keep up with, and with Hero and Quackenbush being the trainers at Chikara, if I understand things correctly, it's sort of does my wrestling-polluted heart good to imagine them and students rolling around the practice ring, coming up with all sorts of goofy shit, Quack's lucha love and Hero's markout for British stiff science style morphing together with the others flavors onto the students into what should be a steady pipeline of kooky Chikara wrestlers to come.

Reckless Youth becomes northern indy trios Ricky Morton, and takes a constant beatdown, working on his throat, and he grabs at his throat whenever someone's not on top of him, selling it. A lot of indy superstars work hard at learning some nifty leg sweep drop toehold into a neck wringer crossface submission, but never even try a little to sell somebody else's offense. Wrestling is carney in nature, and what if the sweet 40-something redneck slut working the softball toss into the milk jug game at the fair didn't sell her gimmick? No one would waste fifteen dollars trying to win a bootleg Pooh Bear stuffed animal that looks like it was born with fetal alcohol syndrome that cost like 89 cents to make in Sri Lanka. Same thing with wrestling... more quality selling, and more quality money-spending marks.

So much shit to mark out too... Jigsaw about to drop his arm a third time after a brutal pummeling ending up in the Hangman's Clutch, but Reckless and Quackenbush break it up by piling on rather than Jigsaw doing the played out Dusty arm up on the third ref check bit... then Cannon rips open Jigsaw's mask, something you hardly ever see in American lucha-based crap, give a taste of authentic appreciation for the lucha libre. Tecnicos win in the end, and a great motherfuckin' match, all the way through.

Larry Sweeney vs. Vries Kastelein - 07/24/05: Chikara has the nicest turnbuckles in wrestling. This is for Sweeney's ICWICWA Tex-Arkana Television title, and Sweeney is flamboyantly conceited, but he is wearing fuchsia tights with deep lavender stars - very old school. And he looks like he could be Shane Douglas' younger brother. Larry runs the World down, and then issues an open challenge, and Ken Wayne would be mad jealous of Larry Sweeney's wrestling trunks. Vries Kastelein is a small dude with the sharp-face of a European, and true enough, the ever-informative Dave Prazak says Vries is the latest to ride the pipeline from central Europe's WXW promotion into indy America's hearts, hopefully. The reason the WWE is stupid is because one night I was watching their syndicated Raw recap program, and I caught one of the three weeks of that Simon Dean dude doing his thing, not even recognizing it was goofy-assed Nova at first. So the WWE takes like three years signing a Nova, pumping him full of nutritional supplements and booking agent penises, professional writers who know as much about wrestling as I do about properly formatting a screenplay come up with this character of pure shit to throw at the wall and hope it sticks, when all the WWE had to do to achieve the same amount of heat was to sign Larry Sweeney's simple ass and have him duck under clotheslines and do

the duck walk and Hindu squat. It's like Vince McMahon is intent on reinventing the wheel half the time.

Vries finally catches Sweeney doing high knee calisthenics, but rather than doing something great like sticking a thumb up Sweeney's ass like Jimmy Valiant would do, he just puts him in a headlock. I have a hard time liking people with obvious European faces, like Vries has, probably owing to a period of unemployment where I got beer money by selling CDs, mostly my own, to Plan 9 Records in Richmond, where everybody who would decide how much money to give me had those sharp faces and fair skin. Man, I hated those guys, but I'd take their money. That hatred has always made me thankful for America being a true melting pot and people of different races having sex, and then children, with each other, so that we aren't so white. That is not to suggest white people suck, because all people extremely defined as black or white, racially or politically or however, usually tend to suck. It's only when we all get smoothed down to those subtle shades of gray that we can all get along, racially or politically or however, and enjoy ourselves without everybody getting all uptight about black-and-white things.

They do WRESTLING'S MOST PLAYED OUT SPOT of trading knife's edge chops to bare chests, then

Kastelein drops Sweeney errantly on his brain. Sweeney goes for his finisher combo, which starts with a nifty neckbreaker where he holds onto the other dude afterwards, but then Vries goes for some stretchy submission finisher of his own, but Sweeney rolls out, wanders over to the pool tables in the corner and takes a count-out, but keeps his title belt, because unless you are Playboy Buddy Rose, you cannot win a title via count-out.

Mike Quackenbush/ Sabian/ Equinox/ Eddie Kingston vs. Chris Hero/ Arik Cannon/ Claudio Castagnoli/ Gran Akuma - 07/24/05: Eddie Kingston is cutting a face promo, and he's such a natural heel, I'm impressed with what a great face promo he cuts. The first few times I heard him on color commentary, he wasn't that helpful to the matches, but this promo is motherfuckin' perfect. It sucks that there's so little talking in indy wrestling that if you can cut a good promo you get automatically thrown into doing commentary. One doesn't necessarily equate to the other.

The story here is Hero is now a dick, having turned on Mike Quackenbush - his ol' buddy from way back. Claudio Castagnoli oozes charisma, a Tully Blanchard for the anime generation. As for Arik Cannon, I know it's wrestling, but if you're a little pug-faced dude with a mohawk, shiny pleather clothes sort of confuses me. If he wants to look like a little dirtbag crusty punk, he should be in cargo shorts with Crass patches safety pinned to the pockets. And then Equinox and Castagnoli have a sweet little exchange of strange-dressed David vs. cocky Goliath. They tease Hero getting his ass kicked by Kingston constantly, and it breaks into 8-man insanity, but with authentic lucha-based nonsense.

Castagnoli catches Quackenbush in the most ridiculously long Candido-style suplex ever. Hero holds back on punching Kingston, further teasing some quality scrapping once it finally breaks open.

Hero with two-count on Kingston, Sabian with two-count on Hero, Castagnoli with two-count on Sabian, Equinox with near submission on Castagnoli, Cannon on Equinox, Kingston on Cannon, but Akuma with two-count on Kinston, but reverse...a bunch of goofball teases leads to Quackenbush beating Hero with the Hero's Welcome. A good enough match on it's own, but more importantly, part a few larger stories, which this not being any sort of main event or blow-off match, is all you could ask for.

Hero is forced to choose either Quack or Kingston to fight at the next show, and after much grandstanding and stonewalling, he is forced to choose. He picks Kingston, putting Quackenbush over as the main face in the process, but also pumping up Kingston's status as new-found good guy in Chikara extra-ordinaire. Reading Kingston was a face in Chikara certainly confused me, but goddamn, he pulled it off well. Kingston, Castagnoli, Hero... these guys should go to Mexico for a year or so.

Shane Storm vs. Icarus - 07/24/05: Grand finals ultimo of the Young Lions Cup 3. Young Lions is a term long-used in wrestling to describe some upstart people have just started to love or hate upon as the next incarnation of Ric Flair. Sam Houston used to be that guy. I guess since this is Chikara, THE Young Lion of here would be heir apparent to Quackenbush status in wrestling, which wouldn't be a bad thing at all, but isn't necessarily the most golden of positions in this world, even if you narrowed it down to wrestling.

Icarus is a smallish longhaired dude who pulls the hair back in a tight ponytail and has a big bad-in-a-good way back tattoo (or maybe good-in-a-bad way, I'm not sure). I bet he owns a couple of Queensryche CDs. Shane Storm is built like a softball player, has the greatest goofy mask this side of Curry Man, has the most generic indy wrestler name ever, and comes out to "Welcome to the Jungle", which already makes me love him, regardless of the stupid wrestling. But the dude can wrestle too, even though, him in his big fucked-up mask, they work in the comedy spots as well. I don't necessarily dig the comedy matches because there's no potential for heated violence when you're being a funny man, and heated violence is my favorite flavor of professional wrestling. Shaska Whatley was a comedy wrestler, as was Buggy McGraw. But they both had the potential to get ugly if necessary. I don't see a crimson mask soaking through that Storm mask at any time ever. I'll give him this though - most indy wrestlers, Icarus included, look like you were creating a player in Madden, but instead of generic football features it had generic wrestler features, so that you could have long hair or a sunburst tribal tattoo on your shoulder or shiny black pants and so on. Shane Storm would not be created in that game, ever, but where that takes him in his wrestling life, I don't know. I'm hoping it leads to him teaming with Asian Coogar against El Drunko & Onryu at some point.

Other wrestlers come out one-by-one to line the ring apron and slap or clap in support of their boy. Icarus takes advantage over on the stage diving off a speaker column, but he's not indistinguishable from seven hundred other wrestlers, so Shane Storm gets the win that makes the crowd happy like a Santo movie. He staggers around and triumphantly holds up his golden trophy while Axl Rose sings, but all I can think about is Alere Little Feather. I know I didn't review

[illegible]

Well that's alright with me 'cos I have got the time

To wait in case someday you maybe change your mind

[illegible]

Manny Fernandez vs. Black Bart - 11/22/84- [RAVEN MACK]: This is for the Mid-Atlantic Brass Knucks title, from Starrcade '84. Necro Butcher gets so much internet love, I figured I'd look at something from his trainer, Black Bart, accompanied by J.J. Dillon. Hard to believe at that point in time, Michael Jackson was still acceptable enough to mainstream Southern America that a take-no-shit tough guy babyface like Manny Fernandez could be using "Beat It" as his entrance music. Fernandez's blonde dyejob rattail/short-and-long thing is easily the greatest hair in wrestling of the last thirty years. Black Bart always seemed to look like the type of guy who was a real life good-timed curmudgeon, who enjoyed ZZ Top, but also enjoyed picking fights with eggheads. It made his heel character so natural to jeer. Black Bart also is probably the only wrestler who wore the old school singlet type trunks who always seemed to be kicking a farmer's tan. Usually guys are either pale or tanned, and rarely do you see an actual farmer's tan in a wrestling ring, showing Bart's blue collar roots, or maybe the fact he sat outside the hotel room on the balcony drinking all day during his JCP heyday. Granted this is the second Starrcade, so it was a hyped crowd, but I love the heat of big old school crowds, where you get giant pops for simple backtoss bumps. I haven't been to too many indy shows where the energy of the crowd just overrides your own sense of emotion, which I'm sure was common back then. Ragin' Bull's forehead scar tissue is the first to be skimmed with a razor shard, and Bart is working him with 'bows and blows to make it real. Bart's hair, wilder and kinkier and longer than

even Necro's, accentuates Bull's blows when Bart flings his head back in reverse thrash metal bassist motion. Bart rolls out the ring for the stealth, face-down in concrete blade job, and both men are bleeding the forehead trickle.

Bart is in complete control, but pushes down ref Sonny Fargo to get his bullrope from J.J. Dillon, and Fernandez schoolboy's him for the victory, before even one outside implement of destruction could be employed. At that point in time, the tease of ultra-violence was enough when combined with a properly positioned crimson mask. Today, we have been desensitized completely, and it's only a matter of time before somebody gets completely fucked up in a weed-eater or crow's nest spot gone awry. However, I wish the accelerated carnage of today's ultra-violence wrestling could give me the satisfaction once in a while that you could get back then of seeing J.J. Dillon's shitty ass in a bad tuxedo jumping up and down emphatically in completely defeated frustration. That's what you get, J.J. Dillon, for being such an asshole all the time.

THE 2001 EAGLE PRO CRUISERWEIGHT TOURNAMENT- SUPER JUDIST/CRUSHER TAKAHASHI (CROWN) vs. HIROSHI SHIMADA/TAKAO IWASAKI (EAGLE)- PART VII- [DEAN RASMUSSEN]: "So tell me more about when you were fucking Michelle. I don't care how many times you tell me about it, I can't believe you fucked her and I didn't. I CAN'T FUCKING BELIEVE THAT."

"Judist, c'mon, she knew all about your problems: the tiny penis, the latent homosexuality, that whole dog-fucking episode..."

"Less jokes, more sex talk."

"Speaking of dogs, she would fuck like a dog fucking a goat. You should have fucked her. She would always say that she was just fucking me over and over and over and over and over and over and over and over again just to get your attention. She really wanted to ply you with her astounding supercooter. She said she could fuck me stupid but she was saving up the molten hardcore endless mounting for you and your miniscule pecker."

"Jiminy fucking Crickets, I fucking hate you. Tell me more about her cooter."

"Oh, it was like something out of Playboy. She had Playboy skin and didn't need airbrushing. Her hinder was too big and curvaceous for Playboy though. You being the quintessential Ass Man would have truly appreciated it when she whipped it out. It would turn a normal man into a perverted ass-worshipping freak. So it's probably for the best that she never actually got around to you. Luckily, she got around to me. Five or six times a day for 7 weeks."

"I had a shot at her. But I was IN LOVE! IN LOVE! I was fucking 20 years old and turned down SUPERPUSSY because I thought I was in love."

"God, even in hindsight, you are the dumbest motherfucker on earth. She was the first woman to show up at my door with a rope in one hand and riding crop in the other, saying 'Saddle up, daddy'."

"And the LAST."

"Shut up, boy, I'm taunting you. Who were you in love with when you were 20? And did she love it doggystyle all the time like Michelle?"

"Oh no. No. Not at all. I was in love with GLENDA. I turned down Michelle for sexually listless GLENDA. Glenda was like fucking in high school- the begging, the not swallowing, the endless pressuring that paid off NEVER. AND I COULDA FUCKED MICHELLE! Jesus Christ, I fucking hate you."

"Yeah well, you are the dumbest motherfucker on earth. Michelle told me about that- the time y'all played basketball over at Carl's house. She was so pissed off and embarrassed that you didn't fuck her after she basically threw herself at you that she refused to ever think about ever fucking you again. Eventhough she had a thing for you. Oh, my brother, that made me laugh so hard the first time she told me. Yoooo stupid motherfucker. God, what the fuck were you thinking, you complete fucking idiot? Anyway, Michelle useta like to meet at Pembroke mall and liked to fuck in the janitor's closet at the video arcade. She had some psycho reasons for every weird way and place she would fuck you and you never listened to her reasons as she was pulling your pants down. You just kinda nodded and TRIED as hard as you could TO WRITE DOWN IN YOUR HEAD EVERY SECOND OF IT because you knew you were never going to get better pussy than this. Well, YOU never even got THAT but I think if you try to get inside my mind, you can understand how mindblowing it was to fuck Michelle. Actually, you'll never understand. But you did get those half-hearted handjob from Glenda."

"God, those sucked. God, she sucked. God, I can't believe I didn't fuck Michelle."

"Having fucked Michelle over and over and over and over and over again, I can honestly say that you SHOULD horrendously regret it. You'll just have to believe me. I've sustained YEAR LONG relationships by pretending my sex partner was Michelle and that she was sick or something and thus sucked at fucking like all women do in comparison. It's like you didn't buy Microsoft stock when your roommate Bill Gates offers it to you the day he started it. You are like if the Dallas Cowboys turn down the Hershel Walker trade. You suck."

"Yeah. So her ass was amazing."

"Fuck me runnin, it was like looking at the face of God. If God's face was an amazing ass of a woman."

"Okay, that's...uh..."

"And she could WORK it. She was a MACHINE. I mean, she... God...It's like: You would bring your A game. Breathing control, thinking of baseball- what ever bush league technique you would use to try and not just blow a load when she takes off her earrings. Fuck, after the second day, you are blasting viscous spunk into the front of your shorts on the drive over just thinking about- you know- kissing her. But you'd get in there and she would work you so that you would go until she got tired of it. I mean I'll be the first to tell you that I like to have sex for 15 minutes, climax, do some cuddlin' and get some sleep. Y'know, I got a big day tomorrow. But with her, I would lose whole four day weekends- 58 minutes a shot, 6 times in 7 hours, four days in a row. She was like Lynn Swann and you got to be John Stallworth on the other side. She would take the double coverage so you could just flail wildly in insane sexual bliss."

"Jesus. Meanwhile, I beg Glenda to please suck the very end of my dick at least. And I'll try to get it over with as soon as possible."

"God, you poor pathetic sap. Meanwhile, I was hoping- HOPING- that my heart would explode while I was fucking Michelle. And I was right to think so. Everything since then has passively amusing or slightly entertaining in comparison- our riveting friendship excluded, of course."

"Oh yeah. So.... her boobies."

"I think that's enough for now. Bother me no more about it for at least 6 months."

"Gottdammit."

Bob Backlund vs. Jimmy Snuka - Madison Square Garden - 06/28/82- [RAVEN MACK]:
Backlund - vanilla old style champ stuck in athletically able past of amateur recognition, waiting to have belt handed to Iron Sheik as transition into sports entertainment age. Snuka - wild-haired, well-spoken, dangerous vagabond walking around like a dadblamed fool barefoot through post-industrial cities, probably lacking Jesus. A serious conflict, only able to be settled inside a cage. As men, we live free, as we like to think, with dominion over whatever our free will is taught to believe we have dominion over. We cage other animals - for food, for profit, for fun. But in the theater of wrestling, where disparate cuts of men do battle to act out the demons and angels in our real lives as fans, when the battle is not properly allowed to be acted out as it must, men choose to cage themselves. It is a beautiful concept and should not be taken, nor used lightly.

The white man has added the stipulation that you cannot go over the top of the cage to win, thus hampering Snuka's chances of winnings. You must go through the door. Men like Snuka, growing up in fishing villages and not knowing the feel of clothing until well past the age of 14, they do not have doors automatically in their lives to learn to try and escape from. Things are open on ground level and you are more likely to allow yourself to soar high over top of things than walk through an arbitrary door. Whether you talk of Biblical missionaries or WWWFE World Champions, the western white man has engineered things in his favor.

Jimmy Snuka is underrated as a great wrestler. One of my vague memories as youngster is of him and Ricky Steamboat having a match on Mid-Atlantic Wrestling for the U.S. title, and since I've never gotten it on any other tape, my alcohol-soaked mind thinks my five-year-old ass watched them have an hour-long match for the title that wasn't even over when the show went off the air. I'm sure, if I were to get this tape, there'd be a few Gene Ligon and Magic Dragon matches on there beforehand, but in my mind, they went an hour. And Backlund, in all his pastiness, is a pretty cock diesel motherfucker - not new school creatine cut, but old school "I could lift one end of a VW bug to win a bar bet" cut.

Apparently, the weight of a cage during a cage match weighs down the ring so that the top rope hangs just ever so slightly lower, because whenever someone gets Irish whipped in a cage match, rather than springing right back at ya, they flip over the top into the cage. Snuka tastes the cage and hits blade positioning, and I also love how old school, when you bladed, then you got punched and thrown into something, then sat there prone getting pummeled for all to see, to validate the blood. Now, you would just blade yourself, get up, reverse a move and then start clapping your hands like Robert Gibson and nothing ever happened. Most of us don't bleed in regular life, and when we see blood in a wrestling match, it's nice to make it something more than just casual bloodletting.

You know the story - Backlund lays prone while Snuka climbs to the top of the cage and dives far but hits nothing (Snuka was the early '80s Sabu), and Backlund crawls through the door for the win.

Snuka could've went over the top while climbing up for the Superfly, but didn't, because he wouldn't have won the match. Backlund slithers his way to victory though, after the miss, because this match is racist. No title for a Polynesian. Shit, the only reason Iron Sheik was allowed to win was so that the Persian race could be mocked with the shortest title reign in recent memory, not to mention the quickest title match loss by dropping the belt to your eventual Real American Hulk Hogan. I can guarantee you that Vince McMahon would never have allowed his daughter to marry The Rock. He'll pay for her to get fake tits and marry a man who has an anal fetish, but she's not allowed to breed with minorities.

Antonio Inoki vs Billy Robinson- 12/11/75- NWF Heavyweight Championship-[DEAN RASMUSSEN]: A KWilson posted this on the matches board and as it is possible to see any match ever at some point on the internet, we thank him for hiping us to this gigantically long match. I was worried about this match- as it seems like one of those matches that people who cream over 70s wrestling without understanding that 99% of 70s wrestling was based on ghoulish obsession with blood being ripped out of folks heads and giant bumps being taken by complete psychos in plaid tights. The first ten minutes is all technical wrestling and I was really fearing that I was going to have go on about how awesome Inoki's cravate was and then try to remember the stories about what a legit dick Robinson was to the boys in the back and then try to ride the hour out with constant breaks where I could drink some of this 12 pack of Steel Reserve that isn't leaving my house via my bladder fast enough. LUCKILY, at the 11 minute mark, we all remember that the great part about 70s wrestling is all the blood and ridiculous

bumps taken by complete fucking psychos. Robinson goes all heel on Inoki and they start beating the fuck out of each other and Billy Robinson just fucking blows the roof off the INSANE SPOT department by fucking Belly-to-Belly suplexing Inoki over the toprope to the floor. What the FUCK?!? Isn't this something Kobashi and Misawa would stick in their match to pop the rubes in 2004? They both make the 10 count and I guess the psychology of 1975 psuedo-hookers was just as shitty as 1999 sports entertainers. I mean it's 2 out of 3 falls and when you take the biggest bump in wrestling up to that point, someone should have- you know- SOLD it. Call me the crazy. Anyway, they flail around and Inoki fights out of Robinson's Butterfly Suplex finisher and we keep rolling. Robinson hits a cross-armbreaker at 15 minutes and this really is 20 years ahead of its time. Inoki fights out of it by giving the hold more credibility than every heavyweight in New Japan in the 1990s ever did. Robinson moves it into the pressure hold form of the move and Inoki hits the ropes. They go back to a 70s match with Robinson procuring the headscissors and Inoki reversing it into an Indian Deathlock that Robinson sells like it wasn't a finisher for Harley Race and everybody who wrestled face in the South. Robinson hits a nice backbreaker and Inoki sells it for a while. Robinson leans into a Boston Crab and Inoki fights out and they do a Malenko-Guerrero sequence and they are burning through finishers faster than a 8 man Michinoku Pro elimination match. Inoki works a kneebar and Robinson is fun spindling Inoki's arm in a myriad of ways to try to escape. Robinson finally turns it into a pinning predicament to make Inoki break the hold and it was basically a neat variation on the Key-Lock sequence. And I await the hate to kick back in as they are obviously killing time until they start beating the shit out of each other again. Robinson goes all lucha with a preposterous double leglock and some two counts and await the meat of the match kick back in. Inoki gets another head scissors and we kill more time until the hate. They go with the headscissors a while and Robinson is fun showing his frustration at not being able to escape after 79 minutes. I assume that Robinson and Lou Thesz worked this spot in a barn in Kansas for 47 minutes in 1968 and the crowd LOVED IT. God, they work this spot for 10 minutes. Robinson finally bridges out and they stand around and go to a 10 minute headlock. No, I'm kidding. Robinson shoots him into the ropes and starts kicking it into gear with a flying forearm and they trade dropkicks and Robinson fights out of Inoki trying to use Robinson's own finisher on him. Robinson sinks in a cravate and it's fucking BEAUTIFUL. I love how he stomps into it and jerks Inoki's head around. He reverses his position and drops Inoki into an Ace Crusher. So Robinson pretty much created modern wrestling- both good and ill. They do a bridging thing and Robinson starts selling his leg, so I guess he actually hurt it. Inoki fights out of Robinson's finisher and they feign punching each other. Inoki kinda slaps on the Octopus Hold and Robinson fights out and goes for his Butterfly Suplex and there ya go. Robinson hits a Tombstone for not even a nearfall and this really is the blueprint for every Kyoko Inoue-Minami Toyota 60 minute draw. Robinson and Inoki trade some holds and I'm assuming that someone has to go through a table for someone to win. Robinson sells an Irish Whip and Backdrop bigger than anything else in the match and they go back to fighting for the Boston Crab that didn't work the first time. Inoki's Boston Crab reminds me of the shittiness of the Rock's Sharpshooter. Robinson escapes and Inoki tries going for the Boston Crab again. Robinson counters and gets the three count! Okay. I...I...I guess the whole first fall was Robinson counterwrestling so he should suddenly get a three count off of a counter. Who am I to argue?

Second fall starts with Robinson going for the flash pin and going for some kind of Quaternelson and they jockey around in the corner. Robinson takes a elbow to the face and bumps big over the top rope to the floor like Bobby Heenan mentally took over the match and said, "God, what are the fuck are you doing? Bump to the fucking floor and start bleeding. We're falling asleep here." It's preposterous but spectacular. I think I love Billy Robinson. Inoki with the Vertical Suplex for two and Robinson takes a hiptoss GIGANTIC. Robinson takes a big Belly-to-Back and Inoki stalks the ring and wants to go in for the kill as Robinson rolls around in the ropes like Terry Funk. Inoki starts beating on Robinson and yeah, fuck it- I love this match. Ooo, droptoe hold into a Romero Special and Inoki is on fire as he releases the hold. Robinson sells it all like death and Inoki does a very elaborate backslide. Robinson gets to his feet and starts beating on Inoki and hits his finisher but Inoki is in the ropes. Robinson sinks in a headlock and hits a suplex and Robinson starts beating on him some more. They flail around in the ropes for a while until Robinson hits a perfect Himalaya German Suplex and gets some nearfalls off it. Inoki bridges out finally and they work the spot to perfection as Inoki shows fighting spirit while Robinson drives knees into his stomach. Robinson starts stalling to ride out the one hour time limit. Inoki is pissed and starts bustin up Robinson in the corner and it's a full blown assbeating. Inoki hits a sweet chop to the throat and Butterfly Suplex for two. Inoki stomps him to death and bodyslams for another two. Robinson blocks a second chop to the throat and hits a European uppercut and a Butterfly Suplex for two. Inoki hits the ropes and ducks a forearm and whips out the Octopus Hold and Robinson taps like a bitch. And thus, one fall a piece and it's a draw. It's a great fucking match. Robinson rules and Inoki always ruled. Robinson was quite the bump freak in addition to being legit- sorta like a less fun Ray the Crippler Stevens. HEY! They have a third fall for a minute. Inoki with the dropkicks and Robinson and Inoki just beat the shit out of each other. Ah yes, and time runs out after a minute of trying to kill each other. Heat is the key to the 70s match and this one really toyed with the heat- and I can see how these type of matches created the whole King's Road style. Makes a great match even better.

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